

File No. 9110003

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF MARK STEFFENS

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: I'm McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. We're interviewing Chief Mark Steffens of Division 1, formerly the commanding officer at the Office of Medical Affairs. The date of the interview is October 2nd, 2001. It is now 2:47 p.m. This conversation is taking place in conference room 8E13 at Fire Department headquarters.

I'm also joined by --

MR. CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, fire marshal.

MR. STERACE: Fire Marshal Michael Sterace.

MR. McALLISTER: And Chief Mark Steffens.

Q. Chief Steffens, I'd like to draw your attention to the date of September the 11th, 2001, and I'd like for you, in your own words, to describe your experiences from that day.

A. I normally start work at 9:00, so 8:50 I was still home showering, getting ready for work. I saw what happened on the television going on. I heard what happened. I saw

initially the first tower on fire.

I got dressed as fast as I could. I got into my department vehicle, and I proceeded all the way to the Kosciusko Bridge down the BQE. My next recollection is being on the FDR Drive. I don't remember how I got from the BQE to the FDR Drive.

My next recollection is I'm coming down the FDR Drive. I get down to about the Staten Island ferry terminal, and I couldn't get any further. Civilians were running everywhere. There was smoke in the air, and the white powder was in the air. I think only the first tower had dropped at that point.

Q. Had dropped?

A. The people who were running, they said the first tower had dropped already. So I would imagine this is probably like about -- I'd say somewhere between 9:15 and 9:30, thereabouts, by the time I got into Manhattan.

I abandoned my vehicle at about the Staten Island ferry terminal. I pulled over there, by where they have the chopper pads on the East River. I abandoned my vehicle. I put a

mayday on the radio that I was abandoning my vehicle because I did not have a portable radio with a charged battery at that time.

So I got out. I was on foot. I was heading up South Street to Division 1 on foot. That was as far as I got. Coming down South Street was Jerry Bacchus, who was the ALS coordinator for the EMS command. He picked me up.

Q. He was in a vehicle?

A. He was in a suburban. He had the suburban stocked with medical supplies. He picked me up, because I was on foot at that time. I got in the suburban with Jerry Bacchus. We went down the drive, under the hole, out onto West Street. We got up to about the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

When we got to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, about that point on West Street, there was a Port Authority cop standing there. They were shouting, "The tower's going to come down. The tower's coming down. You've got to get out of here."

Q. What were you able to observe at that



time around there?

A. Black smoke. Black smoke and people running everywhere. A lot of fire apparatus on both sides of West Street. I didn't see any guys, just apparatus. I saw some stretched lines and things like that.

So we continued to drive into the smoke cloud. We got to maybe one block north of where the Battery Tunnel exits onto West Street there, and then, boom, a massive explosion. Right in front of us we saw what looked like a fireball and smoke. It was rolling this way.

I said, "Jerry, we've got to get out of this fucking car." I'm afraid --

Q. That's okay.

A. I'm afraid -- so we bailed out of the truck.

Q. This is your recollection.

A. We bailed out of the suburban. We went underneath it. The thing blew over us. I had my turnout coat on. I put my face in my helmet. The thing blew over us. I felt heat. I felt all kinds of debris and stuff hitting my body.

When I opened my eyes, it was

pitch-black. I closed my eyes again. I was praying. When I opened my eyes a second time -- and it feels like each one of these instances was a long period of time, but I don't know how long it was.

When I opened my eyes a second time, it was like skiing in a blizzard. It was just white, a sea of white, and everything blowing all around. So I felt okay. "Jerry, we've got to get out of here."

We got out from under the vehicle. We got back in the vehicle. We jumped over the divider and started driving back down West Street to the battery. We got to battery -- we put the vehicle up against where that old fortress is right by the Holocaust memorial. There's an old fortress right where the Statue of Liberty ferry terminal is.

Q. Sure.

A. We put the vehicle up against that wall, and each one of us climbed into one of those cubbyholes.

Then there was another it sounded like an explosion and heavy white powder, papers,

flying everywhere. We sat put there for a few minutes. It kind of dissipated. We pulled the vehicle out, right down to the battery. We turned on the emergency lights, and it became a casualty collection point.

Q. Had you been in radio contact from the time you were on West Street?

A. The last radio contact was when I maydayed when I bailed out of the vehicle. No other radio contact after that point.

Q. There wasn't a radio in the suburban?

A. There was a radio in the suburban, but I don't recall that we were using it. We were running at that point. We were coming down West Street. One of the EMS guys was running. He was just dressed in blue, covered in soot, bleeding from under the face like this. We grabbed him. We threw him in the back of the suburban. We pulled down to West Street.

When the smoke and all of that dissipated, we turned on the lights. It became a casualty collection point there. All the EMS people were running down West Street. They collected by our vehicle.

All kinds of vessels, barges, little small pleasure craft, everything was just pulling up to the dock, and we were putting civilians -- there was one police lieutenant -- I don't know his name. He did a fantastic job. And we just evacuated as many civilians onto these boats and sent them to Jersey.

My guys established that casualty collection point. We were doing eye washes and boo-boos and giving out whatever masks we had to civilians and to cops like that. We were there for what seemed like a couple of hours at the battery until the point there was nobody left, just the emergency service people.

At that point I became aware of an EMS operation that was going on in the Staten Island ferry terminal. So I gathered up my guys, and we walked on foot to the Staten Island ferry terminal, where I was reunited with the other folks that established the casualty collection point at the Staten Island ferry terminal there.

I was there for a couple of hours, and then we were all directed to report to the command post which was at Chambers and West.

That was early afternoon. We regrouped and were given various assignments. I was sent to command the Chelsea operation.

Q. So you think that when you were on the drive the smoke you saw was probably from one of the aircraft and not from a building?

A. No, because it wasn't heavy smoke. You could smell fire. I know the smell of fire, and I have been around long enough. So I recognized the smell of fire. But there wasn't all of that debris or anything flying around in the air. There was just people, people everywhere, people running.

I got to the point where I couldn't go any further with my vehicle because there were people in the streets, on the drive. So that's when I decided to bail out of the vehicle, figuring I could make better time on foot.

Q. Sure.

A. My thought was let me go to Division 1, group whatever I could so we could go to the incident site.

Q. When you were on West Street approaching the World Trade Center site, do you

think that's when the first tower that came down?

A. I think it was the second tower came down, although I don't know for sure.

Q. Was there a lot of debris while you were still going on West Street?

A. No.

Q. Powder?

A. No. A lot of fire apparatus, a lot of engine companies like that.

Q. The street was clean?

A. It seemed wet. There were stretched lines. I didn't see my guys. This seemed weird to me, all this apparatus but no guys. There were lines stretched on the ground but no guys.

Q. So it was clear while you were going up West Street?

A. Yes. That's when we heard this massive explosion and I saw this thing rolling towards us. It looked like a fireball and then thick, thick black smoke.

Q. Is it possible the second one occurred while you were in the battery?

A. The second one had to have occurred while we were at the battery, because that's when

all this white stuff started flying around.

Q. That sounds right.

A. But the time line -- I don't know when these things actually occurred in real time. I was home at 8:50. I had to be in the car before 9:00. I was just about dressed. I was shaving, putting on the finishing touches, when I saw the thing on the news. I ran to the car. You can look at my unit history in the CAD system, see what time I logged on and proceeded down there. It took me a while to get down the BQE.

Q. It seems like there was about a 45-minute period, between about 9:45 a.m. and 10:30.

A. 8:45.

Q. No, I'm talking about where the both the buildings came down. I'm not entirely accurate on that, but that's what it seems like to me, at the time.

A. It seemed like the time frame between what we saw on West Street and what occurred when we were at the battery, it seemed like they happened close together. But when I think about the things that occurred during that period of

time, it couldn't have been close together because too many things happened. But it seemed like they happened very close to one another.

The whole thing seemed like it happened very quickly from getting no further with the vehicle so let me just pull this car over and bail out, what I can do on foot. I didn't get more than a block or two -- you know where the fire station is on South Street?

Q. Yes.

A. That's where I was. Jerry picked me up right there. We went right into the hole, came around up onto West Street. I didn't know what the hell -- when the Port Authority cop tried to stop us -- he waved and said, "No, the building's going to come down."

At that point I wasn't listening to any cop. My thought was I've got to go there. My guys are there. Then boom and the cloud. I didn't want to stay in the vehicle. I was afraid that the windows were going to blow out. My reflex action was to get underneath it.

Q. How did the vehicle survive when you got out from under the vehicle?



A. Just covered with soot. It didn't blowout any windows or anything like that. I guess we weren't close enough. So the vehicle survived. It had a lot of powder and stuff on the windshield like that. At that point I was just grateful to be able to get in and get the hell out of there.

Q. Is there any follow-ups? I want to know, did you see anybody on the way that was present that you knew besides the guy that picked you up, Bacchus? Anybody else? Did you see anybody else from the Fire Department?

A. No. No, I grabbed the one EMS guy. I never saw him before. I remember his name is Badillo, Benjamin Badillo, an EMT in the Bronx. He just came out of the cloud, poor kid, covered, bleeding down the face. I grabbed him and said get in this truck, and the three of us bailed out to the battery.

Q. Any follow-ups?

Do you have any other observations, Mark?

A. When I went back to recover my vehicle, I recovered my vehicle and caught up with Chief

Basile and Chief Villani. We were going to go look for their vehicles. We drove out onto West Street. I came from the Statue of Liberty ferry terminal. My car was on the east side, so it was fine, it was okay.

We drove back down again. We weren't able to go down the hole. We went onto West Street. When we pulled onto West Street, it was just like nothing I've ever seen in my life. All the apparatus, the fire trucks, everything all blown out, the windows were all blown out, body parts lying on the street, mud, soot, people walking around dazed.

I saw one proby -- he had a proby on the helmet -- by himself, walking by himself. I tried to get him to come with us. He said, "No, no, I've got to go back. I've got to go back." We washed his eyes. I gave him something to clean his face. Then he turned around and went back into the cloud. I never saw him again.

There were lines stretched --

Q. Do you recall his name?

A. No. Young, young guy. He had a proby on the front of the helmet.

Q. Any numbers on there?

A. I can't remember. I can't remember at all. I didn't want him to go back, and he wouldn't listen to me. I wasn't going to hold him back. He walked off.

Q. That was after the second or after the first collapse?

A. After the second. He just walked back into that big, black cloud.

That's as much as I recall.

Q. I appreciate your time today. Thank you very much. Thanks, Chief.

A. I'm sorry I couldn't be of more help.

MR. McALLISTER: It's 3:01 p.m., and the interview is now concluded.

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File No. 9110004

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC MANUEL DELGADO

Interview Date: October 2, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

M. DELGADO

MR. McALISTER: This is Kevin McAlister from the Bureau of Administration. It is October 2nd at 2:03 p.m. We're in conference room 8E13 at Fire Department Headquarters, and in a moment we will begin interviewing Paramedic Manuel Delgado. I'm here today with...

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

MR. McALISTER: Now we'll start with Paramedic Manuel Delgado. He's assigned to the Office of Medical Affairs.

Q. Drawing your attention to September the 11th, could you describe where you were working that day and when you became aware of the World Trade Center incident?

A. It must have been about five to 9:00. I got a call from Joe Farrell, who is a DOH rep from the Bureau of Emergency Services, the Department of Health, calling me saying what's going on at the World Trade Center? I had no knowledge of it. I looked immediately to the CAD, the computer-aided dispatch system, in the computer. I noticed that there was a

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1040, a plane into the World Trade Center. I called him back and advised him of such.

At this point, one of the doctors that was here, Dr. Cherson, I advised him of the fact that there was a 1040 going on and maybe, you know, it's part of our response matrix.

Q. What's a 1040?

A. An airplane into a building.

So I called Commissioner Clair, who at that time was up in Albany in a CMAC meeting, let him know what was going on, and I told him I would get back to him as soon as I got to the scene. Myself, Dr. Cherson, and we met up with Dr. Guttenberg, who is the EMS fellow in the office downstairs, us three proceeded to get in Dr. Cherson's car and drove across the Brooklyn Bridge.

Obviously, when we were driving across the Brooklyn Bridge, it was very obvious that there was something serious going on at the World Trade Center. There was a gaping black hole. It seemed like the upper floors, and I don't know exactly -- now I know through press reports what floor more or less was hit, but it looked to me like the top ten floors were fully engulfed in smoke at this time.

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Q. How many of the towers were burning; one or two?

A. One. Only one at this time.

So we went across the Brooklyn Bridge, had a little trouble navigating through the traffic, and finally arrived at the corner of I believe it's West Broadway. Let me look on this map real quick. West Broadway and Vesey.

As soon as we arrived, 84, a massive explosion goes off, and at this point we didn't know what it was. We thought it was a secondary explosion. We didn't know that it was a second plane. In fact, I didn't know there was a second plane until much later in the evening.

An explosion goes off. I immediately tell everyone to get out of the car and hide somewhere, go underneath something. It's interesting because, as we were there, there was a police car, I guess, on Vesey, on the corner there, and some debris comes down from whatever this explosion was, at the time we really didn't know, and it just crushes it, I mean, crushes the top front of the police car, which really scared me at that point.

Q. Could you tell if it was airplane parts?

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A. It looked like an airplane part afterward, yes, it did. It looked like part of an engine. It was pretty big. It was probably the size of the hood because it kind of hit it, bounced, and then rolled off.

So then at that point we were approached by a police officer holding one of his cops with a massive evulsion of the forehead. I need the car, I need the car.

Q. What does that mean in layman's terms?

A. An evulsion is the scalp sort of like was peeled back. So there was some heavy bleeding. It was worse actually than the injury. She still had her consciousness. He says, I need the car, I need the car.

So Dr. Cherson proceeded to West Street to the temporary command center at that time. Me, the cop and the cop who was injured and Dr. Guttenberg got into the car and drove this cop that was injured down to Beekman. We drove the cop to Beekman, dropped her off. At that point people were being mobilized at the hospital itself.

Dr. Guttenberg and myself then jumped back in the car and went back to the site.



M. DELGADO

Q. When you say you went back to the site, where exactly did you go at that point?

A. Well, we couldn't get back to where we were on Vesey and West Broadway, so we ended up on -- now, let me look on the map here. Up further. Broadway itself, Broadway between, I would say, Fulton and Ann Street, I guess it is. Fulton and Ann, yes. We kind of left the car there in the middle of the street and proceeded to walk down to the West Street command, which was a command post at this time.

When I got back to the command post, I was able to secure -- because everyone's cell phones seemed to be dead at that point. Luckily, one of the lieutenants there handed me a cell phone. I was able to call Commissioner Clair, who was still in Albany, telling him at this point we had a very, very serious incident going on, and that I don't know how he and the other physicians who were up there could get themselves down here as quickly as possible because this was a major terrorist attack. So he told me that basically the state police were securing a chopper for him and the other two physicians to fly them down. That was my last communication with him.

So we were at West command for a while.

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Dr. Cherson moved forward to I believe it was in another command post. I don't know what building this was. At this point it becomes really crazy.

Q. Can I ask you a detail question before you get there?

A. Yes.

Q. The West command, I see it located here on the map roughly at the corner of -- what is that, Vesey and West?

A. Yes. That looks look Vesey and West, I guess?

Q. Yes. That's the north bridge, I think?

A. Right. We were just in front of the north bridge.

Q. Could you describe, were you on the east side of West Street, the west side?

A. We were on the west -- well, no. I would say the east side of West Street. I guess, on the middle, there's like a barrier here, sort of like a potted, planted barrier before you get to the financial district area. So we were all standing there. The vehicles or the staging, which is the area where the ambulance was set up, was back here on West Street.

Q. Who was with you at that point in time?

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A. At that point, Dr. Cherson was with me. I saw Commissioner Drury showed up at the scene. He was with us there for a little while. He was looking for Commissioner Gregory. Captain Jace Pinkus from Communications was there and an assorted amount of EMS Lieutenants and Fire Operations people were around. I remember at one point seeing the Mayor. I saw Commissioner Von Essen. Really, at that point, I really lose sight of what was going on because there was an horrific site. I mean, people were starting to jump or fall from the top.

Q. You were able to observe that?

A. Yes, definitely. We saw them jumping from here down and that was really horrific. There was nothing you could do for them. We wanted to go in after them and they basically told us don't because it's very dangerous at this point.

Somewhere along the line Dr. Cherson was told that -- and I don't know who relayed this information to him. I guess it's Vesey command, but actually it was on Church between -- I was closer to Cortlandt and I don't know what street this is. Dey Street?

Q. Dey Street.

A. Actually, that's where the command post was,

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a triage command, and we were told that they were getting hammered. So what happened was that myself --

Q. That was a staging point for medics and EMTs?

A. Yes, right. Exactly. That's where mainly all the medics and EMTs were starting to treat people as they were exiting the building. So myself -- well, first, before that, Dr. Cherson tells Dr. Guttenberg to go back to the car and get the weapons of mass destruction kit, which is basically the TUPAM, the atropine and the narcotics that we carry in case of a biological incident. That's what immediately we started thinking. So Dr. Guttenberg goes back to the car.

At this point, also, at the north bridge, we ran into Dr. Asaeda, who got down there on his own response. So Dr. Asaeda was going to set up a command over in the lobby of OEM. What building is that, 7? Tower 7?

Q. 7 World Trade Center.

A. 7 World Trade Center. So Dr. Guttenberg and Dr. Asaeda were to set up their command -- there were already some medics and EMTs in the lobby of 7 World Trade Center. So they were going to set up their own triage and command center there. Dr. Cherson and

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myself then walked back to the Vesey command. But at this point it wasn't right on Fulton. I remember Cortlandt more than I do Fulton, although it might have been. I don't know. I remember the opening of the building and seeing the north tower right in front of me. That I remember very clearly.

We were getting hammered with patients. At one point we wanted to move forward and again we were told do not. Dr. Cherson made it very clear, don't go any more forward because of the bodies and everything else that's coming down.

Q. So now, just stopping you at that point, both of the towers are still standing?

A. Both of the towers are still standing, yes.

Q. You're looking basically straight at the north tower?

A. Right.

Q. You're looking across the plaza of the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, right, and people are exiting this way in droves. I mean, there was just a stream of people running, running, running, and basically at this point our triage was, if you're walking, keep walking, and if people are being carried or people were falling, we

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would move forward, and we moved forward as much as in between towers I believe this was 4 and 5, buildings 4 and 5.

Q. That's right.

A. I know we went in there and helped some people come out, some lady, who she ended up in the pictures, in a red dress, who was extremely burnt. There was another guy who had to have second and third degrees over about 80 percent of his body, and he was carried out halfway and I guess collapsed or someone dropped him and just ran. We picked him up and started bringing him out.

At this point we were getting an influx of equipment, LSU unit, like the logistical support units who carry the oxygen and all that stuff. They were coming into the area to give us oxygen, to give us blankets, and then units were also coming in. But we were getting inundated with patients. We had more patients than we had ambulances. We were stuffing four and five people in an ambulance at this point. I mean, it was just to get people out of there with minimal treatment. There was nothing you could do.

Q. At that point in time, did you see anybody you knew either from the fire or the EMS side working

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the ambulances?

A. Yes.

Q. Who did you see?

A. Quite a few people. There was Carlos Lillo, who I later found out he's deceased.

Q. Where did you last see Carlos?

A. Carlos was with me and it's interesting because Carlos always had a smile on his face, and Carlos has been around for a while, and I remember at one point on Church we had like four or five critically, critically ill people who were laid out and there were people still streaming out, and this is after, where we're moving back and forth trying to get people in and out, I remember turning and seeing Carlos with his helmet and tears pouring down his eyes, and at first I thought maybe this guy is overwhelmed, maybe he needs to get out of here, you know? I go to him, Carlos, what's the matter? What's going on? He says, my wife's in there. I said, listen, man. This is God's will. You've got to help me with the people. Snap out of it. We've got a lot of patients. You've got to help me here. So he does and he begins to do what he has to do, which is to help me treat people and start sorting who is bad and who isn't.

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Now, time, I have no idea, time factor here.

I don't know what is five minutes, what is two minutes, what took ten minutes. I know that a Lieutenant showed up with the LSU unit, again, and says, I need help getting oxygen out of the back of this vehicle. I remember seeing oxygen tanks in a milk crate.

By the way, the other people who were here were Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck, who is from the EMS operations, Captain Janice Olszewski. I remember seeing -- Dr. Cherson was there with me. I lose track of who was there really. I mean, I remember Lillo because it sort of stuck out in my mind that this man was crying so hard and like it kind of -- he was out of place because I was wondering for a slight moment, I said, what's he doing here? He's a Queens unit. But at this point I figured everyone was being brought in and who knows what the heck is going on.

Q. Did you lose track of him then or did you see him?

A. Well, it's interesting because I didn't lose track of him because I was concerned. I was concerned of the fact that he was overwhelmed, I think, by the fact that his wife was in the building.

Oh, you know who else I saw there? Gabe



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Depena.

Q. Delapena?

A. Delapena, yes. I saw him also there because at one point he goes, Manny, Manny, what's going on? He's another one that was searching for his wife because I believe his wife was in the tower.

Q. I think that's right.

A. Yes. But I tried to keep my eye on Carlos as much as I can. I'm dealing with the people that are coming out. There's some other people there that I don't really know their name. I know their faces. A black gentleman that works down for operations also. In fact, there's a picture of them both treating that lady that I'm talking about with the red dress in one of the Time magazines that I forgot his name. It will come to me in a minute. But anyway, we're treating.

I remember at one point or another this Lieutenant coming in and asking for help to get the oxygen out of the vehicle. I go to help him, and at that point I remember not seeing Carlos, and I don't know if he was there or not there. But immediately once I put the oxygen down, I hear the rumble, and I heard a rumble that we thought was another plane. That's what immediately everyone said, there's a plane

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coming, there's another plane coming.

So we all looked up and what we saw was tower, I guess, 2, the south tower, begin to do this. The top kind of did this and there was a horrendous rumble.

Q. Now, your hand is showing that it's kind of tilted in one direction. What direction did it tilt?

A. It was tilting towards us, so it had been to be tilting eastward.

Q. East?

A. Maybe southeast. I'm not sure because at this point it's total pandemonium. At that point we hear the rumble and, you know, this is it. I figure I'm dead. I thought this tower was going to topple. So I start to run. I remember running -- I don't know which way I ran. I don't even know what street I ended up on to be very honest with you. I ran -- it must have been either this or Fulton. One of these two.

Q. Dey Street or Fulton Street?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know if there was a church next to you?

A. I don't know. I know there were stores up the block. So I start to run --

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Q. So you definitely headed east; you're just not sure down what street?

A. Yes. I didn't want to go west. I figured let me go east. There's a subway station somewhere here, so it may have been Fulton maybe?

Q. Yes, it was. It's a major station there.

A. I remember seeing that and I remember saying I'm not going down there because I don't want to be suffocated, I don't want to be suffocated. But as I ran, I got knocked down by it seemed like even someone punched me in the back, like a blast it seemed. It just kind of picked me up and knocked me down. I scraped my elbow, I twisted my ankle, my pants got all ripped, my glasses got blown off and the helmet came off. I get up quickly and all I can see now is just -- it had to be on Fulton -- the blast, this dark cloud coming at us, at me anyway, because I don't even know who's around me at this point. You kind of lose all -- I lost all track of time. I lost basically all body movements and I was going on, and then we're engulfed in the smoke, which was horrendous.

One thing I remember, it was hot. The smoke was hot and that scared me. I've treated in 18 years many, many people with smoke inhalation, and I know the

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consequences of inhaling heat. So I got really scared. I tried to put my T-shirt over me. That didn't work. I couldn't see because my glasses were shot. I couldn't see because my eyes were irritated. Like one guy said, it was like breathing cotton balls, that's what it felt like, because your mouth was just full of this shit and your nose, everywhere. I'm running -- not running because I'm walking now. I'm afraid. I'm thinking in my mind I'm going to die of suffocation or somebody's going to run me over, because you couldn't see your hand in front of you. That's how dark it got. I walked into one or two poles.

Then out of -- I don't know. It was God's miracle, basically. I don't even know how I ended up there. I was on the corner and, as I was telling them just before you walked in, I heard a banging and I walked towards the banging and there was, as later I found out, it was a Fire Marshal and a cop, a detective in plainclothes, who were banging, trying to break the door down in one of these computer stores on the corner there.

Q. Do you know the marshal's name?

A. No. He did take our names down, so he should have a record of it. I haven't been able to find out

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who he is. So they're banging on the door, and I remember telling the cop, you know, you have a fucking gun, you have a fucking gun, use it, use it, we're

Q. Sure.

A. That's exactly what he does. In between his coughing, he takes out his gun and the first bullet doesn't break it. Second one, the glass comes down. It must have been a thick glass. We were able to get inside.

Q. So he fired off two shots?

A. Two shots, yes. Then inside there's, I guess, like a gate, sort of like the gate that we have downstairs in that store, an inside gate. So we see that and we're like, oh, shit. So, finally, us three, we hold it up and we let the civilians get underneath. I think there were one or two of them. There weren't a whole lot of them. Or maybe three. I'm not even sure at this point. They go under and we hold it for each other and we go under and we go into the store. We walk up some escalators to the second floor, which looked to be like a computer store. We started looking for water or anything to wet ourselves to clean off our

M. DELGADO

faces because we're all coughing and hacking. We find a water fountain and we all basically drink from that and wait for the smoke to clear a bit.

Q. Is the smoke in the building, though?

A. Yes. And the smoke alarms are going off and who knows what else is going off. There's smoke but it's not that bad, though, so you could see. It's a haze. It's sort of like when you're in a club and you see the haze, you know, it's hazy, it's not necessarily black, pitch, acrid smoke that was outside. I would say about five or six, seven minutes go by while we're inside. It seemed like an eternity, you know what I mean? So we told the civilians, look, just head towards the water. Leave. Get out of the store. Go towards the water and keep walking. Just keep walking. Don't go this way.

The three of us proceed -- and I don't even know what street it is. I think it was Fulton. It might have been Dey Street. I don't even know what street it was. We start heading back. I believe the store was probably on Broadway. I think I made it that far up. I'm not even sure, though. It had to be because it couldn't have been on Church.

Q. It wasn't J & R was it?

M. DELGADO

A. No. I know where J & R is over by City Hall. No, I wasn't that far. It had to be around Broadway. So I remember we go outside and I lose track of where they went and I start heading down I guess it's Fulton Street and I heard the rumble again. So now it's the second tower coming down.

Q. Now, just prior to that, had the air cleared outside?

A. Yes. It had cleared to the point where you could see. It was still smoky. There was still a heavy smoke condition in the area and dust, I mean, and papers and debris and God knows what else was in the air. But it looks even like snow sometimes because that's kind of coming down from everywhere.

Q. Were there any people out on the street at that point?

A. There were people walking around, yes, in a daze. It looked like a moon landscape really. The lights were on, cars were driving by, and then more dust would be kicked up. I remember walking down and then I heard the second rumble, and I don't even know where it was now. I'm not even sure if I went back to Church or what. But we heard the second rumble, turned right around and started running again and went -- and

M. DELGADO

I remember just going -- I don't even know what street. Now that I look at this map, I don't know what street I was at to be honest with you. I don't know if I got back to Broadway or -- I know I ran backwards, not backwards, but I turned around and started running back up again and went into there was this liquor store -- not a liquor store. It was a clothing store and there were some people in there already, and I got in there, and there was also, I believe, another Fire Marshal in that store. I don't who he was. I think he was a Fire Marshal. I'm not sure because he wasn't a cop. We were able to use the phone in there to try to call out, but whoever I was calling, I was trying to call some of my people but their cell phones weren't working. That was it.

Then, at that point, five, fifteen minutes went by, I guess, before the smoke cleared again. There were very few people in the street at this point. I ended up on I guess it must be Fulton over by Beekman Hospital. There's a little triangular square. It's not even a park. It's like a little square. I ended up there and I ended up running into Dr. Cherson. That's the first time I saw him since the incident went down. Then we ran into Bruce Medjuck,



M. DELGADO

Lieutenant Medjuck, and Bruce had a radio, because Alan's radio was blown off of his pocket or whatever and I don't know where it went, and he told us that we were assembling down at the ferry. That was going to be the main place to try to get people treated there because we weren't going to get around to West Street or to Chambers Street where they were trying to set up another command post because both buildings at this point were down.

So that's what we did. We walked -- I don't know where we walked, but we walked downtown all the way to the ferry terminal, and at that point Chief Basile was there with his aide and some other people were there and we started to get ready for mass casualties to see how many people were coming and who we could try to help. But there were no patients. Nobody was coming.

Q. Not a single patient came to the ferry terminal?

A. A few scratches, bumps, bruises, people who had already left the building way before, some people with some difficulty breathing, one guy with a broken ankle, another one with some trauma to the chest, but nothing life threatening, that was the big thing.

M. DELGADO

Nothing gory. I mean, they were walking wounded for the most part, and that's all we treated.

So a bunch of physicians came from surrounding hospitals, nurses. We got all our resources together, established a critical and a noncritical area, and that was it.

Q. How long was that area set up?

A. Well, from the time we got there, they had already started to move the benches to cordon off the area, and I guess within 20 to 30 minutes the site was set up to accept critical and noncritical. Then our resources started coming in more rapidly, so we were able to get a lot more stuff like extra equipment, blankets, cots. So we had about 20 or 30 critical areas to treat and Dr. Cherson at that point was the Chief medical officer there and started assigning physicians and nurses who were there and medics to certain areas. Then at the street level we had a staging area where the ambulances were being mustered and somebody was taking care of that area. I don't know who he was, some Lieutenant. But nothing ever came.

Q. How long did you stay there?

A. We stayed there until about, I guess, 4:00

M. DELGADO

o'clock, and later on I found out this happened about 10:00, I guess, when this thing collapsed. It must have been about 10:00.

Q. Roughly, yes.

A. So it must have been about 4:00 o'clock.

What we did is we found out that they were setting up a command post on Chambers and West. So we said let's go back and try to find Dr. Cherson's car, see if it's still viable, which we did. We went back to Broadway where it was between Fulton and Dey. Is that Dey Street or whatever it is? There it was in the middle of the street. Amongst all the dirt and everything else that was there, the car was there. It was full of dust on the inside. We ended up driving to Battalion 8 first to wash it off and try to clean off some of the dirt and dust that was all caked onto the vehicle, and then we went to Chambers and West, where the command post was set up, stood there for a little while, and then building 7 collapsed.

We were very far and at this point I remember being there and they said it's collapsing and I didn't even give a shit anymore because, first of all, I was far enough away from it that I kind of knew it's not going to freaking hurt me and, really, I don't know if

M. DELGADO

I was just in a mood that I just didn't give a shit or I felt kind of safe. People started running back and I was just...

At this point my leg started to hurt me, which is interesting. All through the day it didn't hurt me. But I started feeling a tinge in my ankle.

So building 7 came down, the OEM building, and then they moved back forward and the command post was set up and we started hearing of the casualties.

That was sad. That was sad because a lot of my friends are dead. A lot of them. On both sides. And that's a shame. That's a shame. But basically that was it.

I'd say about 9:30 at night, I hitched a ride with some vehicle that was coming to Brooklyn and they dropped me off on Tillary and Flatbush and I hobbled in here. They gave me clothes and stuff and told me to take a shower and that was it. I came back to work the next day, still not understanding, still not really -- which was interesting because, when I got home that night, I got to see the incident. I lived it, but I had never seen it, because I had never seen the planes hit or anything. We thought they were bombs going off. We didn't know. We were being told later on that the Sears Tower was hit and the Pentagon, and you hear

M. DELGADO

all this shit, but you don't know. Actually, when I got home that night, that's when I got to see the actual footage of the plane hitting. It was horrendous. More so when this thing collapsed. That noise? I can never forget it. And the people jumping, the people hitting. I mean, 18 years I've been a medic in this city. I've been through two plane crashes. I have never seen the destruction.

Another thing I've got to tell you is, when we first got there, when we were walking down Vesey towards West, there was a ton of -- or I could say a lot of body parts and like baggage, clothes and stuff, along Vesey.

Q. From one of the airplanes.

A. Yes, from one of the airplanes. I don't know if it was the first or the second because this was after the second one had hit. So it could have been from either one. But I remember walking --

Q. Where was it, though? On Vesey?

A. Right in front of the OEM, because on the OEM building side there was a scaffolding and I remember I was walking underneath there. We kind of felt that there was some protection underneath the scaffolding. I remember as we were walking down, after we had

M. DELGADO

dropped that person off, when we were walking down Vesey, I remember probably between -- what's this?

Q. Church?

A. No. Probably between Broadway and West, I remember seeing body parts.

Q. That's West Broadway.

A. Yes, West Broadway and West on Vesey. I remember seeing body parts and I remember saying to myself where the hell did these freaking body parts come from? Where are these coming from? There was a few. I mean, some recognizable, some that didn't look -- like they were probably charred, and also like luggage stuff, like we saw a lot of shoes, even some luggage, airplane parts, engine. There was an engine on the left here. If you remember, building 7, there used to be that overpass over by building 7. Just in front of it.

Q. The concourse.

A. Just up before that, there was like a little plaza?

Q. Right.

A. Right there, there was like a big engine part. It seemed like a whole engine was right there, lying right there in the middle of the street.

M. DELGADO

Q. Covered like the way the jet looks?

A. Yes. In fact, you could see the fan. I remember that because I could see -- now, it wasn't the whole engine because the engine is big, but I know the front part of it, it looked like the whole engine because I could see the fan, and that's what stood out in my mind. There was an airplane tire also there and then these bodies and luggage from the thing because there were shoes everywhere also. Some shoes had what looked like blood in it, other shoes didn't, other shoes were burnt, and this was just a first impression.

I guess the severity of this whole incident kind of struck me as I was walking to West Street. I knew that this was a serious, very serious event going on, because in my lifetime I have never seen that much destruction, that much carnage. Never. Never in my life have I seen something like that. Everything from bombings that I've been to, to airplane crashes at LaGuardia, I've never seen something to this magnitude, and it kind of woke you up to say the least.

Then over here people, you know, the guys were going into the building. I mean, it was horrible. It really was. It really was. And that was

it. I'm here today because I think the grace of God.

[REDACTED]. I had a few patients who I wish I could have carried away, but you didn't have time. You didn't have time to think. I don't know where Lillo went. I don't know if he went this way or he went that way. Where did he go? I don't know. It's interesting because, of the seven or eight people who were there at this location, none of us ended up in the same place. It's sort of like roaches and you turn the light on, you know what I mean? Everyone scattered. Wherever you saw or you thought there was an opening, that's where you went. Obviously, no one went towards the building, but we all scattered in different directions.

We eventually ended up meeting after the second explosion, three of us met up here, but I didn't see a lot of the people that were with me until two, three days later. I got word that they were okay. For instance, Dr. Guttenberg and Dr. Asaeda, who were at 7 World Trade Center, they got trapped in there and had to like climb in and out and get out because that building also became very damaged supposedly and they were there. We thought they were dead. I guess he was in an area where Commissioner Tierney might have been,



M. DELGADO

I believe. I think she was in 7 also.

So it's just the grace of God. I mean, there was a tremendous loss, but I think that more people survived than really should have to be honest with you with the destruction that occurred there. I mean, you guys have been to collapses. You know what I'm talking about. You have a three-story building collapse, you know the destruction that occurs there. Magnitude that now by a hundred freaking stories coming down on your head.

Q. And by two.

A. Yes. And two of them. So it was the grace of God that any of us that are alive are here, truly it is, because it just should not have been. Luckily and unluckily, I guess, the building pancaked. But if that building toppled, there ain't no way. It took less than ten seconds for that blast of air to knock me down because I remember saying to myself, I got ten seconds to hide, thinking that I may have that long. I don't know why it came into my mind, ten seconds, but I figured I got ten seconds, and I could only maybe have run 50, 60 yards in that time period, and it just knocked me over.

Q. Just the force of the air?

M. DELGADO

A. Yes. It just knocked me over and just threw me, and that was it. I thought that something had hit me. I thought like a piece of metal or something had hit me, and there was no metal, because when I turned around, I saw the blast of black air coming at us, at me anyway, and that was it. That's it. That's the story.

MR. McALISTER: Do you guys have any follow-ups?

FIRE MARSHAL CAMPBELL: No.

FIRE MARSHAL STARACE: No follow-up for me either.

MR. McALISTER: I appreciate your time.

THE WITNESS: Sure.

MR. McALISTER: Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: No problem. Thank you.

MR. McALISTER: It's now 2:35 p.m. and we're going to conclude the interview.



File No. 9110006

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JAMES MURPHY

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

J. Murphy

KEVIN MC ALLISTER: This is Kevin

McAllister from the Bureau of Administration.

It's October 3, 2001, 1224 hours. We are in room 8E13 at headquarters and we are speaking with Paramedic James Murphy from the office of medical affairs. I am joined by --

MR. DANIEL: Patrick Daniel, Fire Marshal.

MR. STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

KEVIN MC ALLISTER: And James Murphy is with us.

MR. MURPHY: James Murphy, Paramedic.

BY MR. MC ALLISTER:

Q. Mr. Murphy, we are going to draw your attention to September 11, 2001, and I would like to get your recollections of the event of that day.

A. I was here in the office and someone came down the hall. I think they got one of the group pages that there was a job at the World Trade Center and we looked in the computer in the CAD system and saw that there was one, an aircraft incident at the World Trade Center, and then we heard yelling from the office of public information, so we all ran down

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there. Because we knew the televisions were there.

And we saw that something had happened to the World Trade Center. A couple of people from the office, two of the doctors and one of the medics, took off right away and the rest of us sort of stayed around getting ready to do whatever. And we ended up preparing to go get an ambulance.

We left here, went to Cumberland, got equipment that belonged to one of the guys that worked here who couldn't go out and then went to Woodhull Hospital and got a ambulance and responded from Woodhull Hospital with the ambulance.

When we went across the bridge, it was the last time we saw the towers. We went across the Manhattan Bridge and they were both still standing. We went across, I think, Canal Street.

Q. Were both of the towers burning at that time?

A. Both towers were burning at that time. We didn't leave until after the second plane hit. By the time we got through traffic to Woodhull to get the ambulance, I'm not -- the timing on that I'm not sure. The only timing I really know is that we arrived between the time the first tower fell and

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the time the second tower fell somewhere on Broadway, around City Hall and I don't remember whether it was at the junction of Park Row and Broadway or higher. I know Warren Street is there somewhere. Whether that was the first place we stopped or whether that was where we actually ended up stopping, I don't know.

We went across Canal Street and then I went and turned and went down Broadway. We were heading into the staging area, which I believe was like on Church Street, somewhere around there, and --

Q. Do you have any idea what time it was at that point?

A. No. We had the radios on in the ambulance, but we didn't hear anything about the buildings collapsing because the siren was on. The truck was not the newest or the quietest thing in the fleet, so we couldn't really hear the radios that well.

We turned down Broadway and as we got down in the City Hall area, there were people running everywhere and a lot of smoke and dust. We really weren't sure what it was. Which sort of surprised us, because the last thing we saw was the

J. Murphy  
smoke was really up high.

We saw, then, an EMS Captain, Janis Olszewski, standing in the middle of the street covered with dust waving at us. That's where I'm not sure where we stopped with her.

Q. Somewhere on Broadway?

A. Somewhere on Broadway, around City Hall. And whether it was up by Warren Street or farther down, I'm not really sure. I just know that Warren street was involved in our stopping at one point.

We started treating some people at that point as they were running by. It was mostly like eye injuries from the flying debris. People were covered and they were having trouble breathing. Then We did hear a report that the second tower was starting to collapse and the Captain who was with us said, "Let's get out of here." Because she had heard the rumble then. It had reached us and we turned and started running and then I realized that I could drive a lot faster than I could run, so we grabbed the truck and I grabbed everybody else that I was with.

That's when I'm not sure where the stop came. Whether I stopped first at Warren and then we went



J. Murphy

on, but the Captain just kept going, kept going. I know we didn't stop running until Canal Street.

Q. What did you observe at that point while you were running and what was the state of the street, if you recall?

A. More people running, lots of people. The dust cloudy saw sort of in the mirror, the second one, as it was coming down. But I was too busy trying to avoid hitting the people that were running in the street.

When we finally stopped to start treating people, we decided -- the Captain felt safe and we decided we would go as far as she was, because she was obviously under the first one when it came down. She was a little, you know, a little, I guess, stressed. I don't know a better way to put it. When she finally felt comfortable, we stopped and started setting up.

We ran into two EMT's and I'm not sure whether it was before we left or after, who had been at the staging area and had to run from their ambulances that had patients in them. Which was not good for them. It wasn't good for us to hear it either. But they started helping us to treat people at the

J. Murphy

scene. Again, it was very minor stuff, because nobody got to us that was pretty badly hurt.

Q. The other EMT's you ran into left ambulances with patients in the back near the collapse?

A. Yes. I'm not sure where those ambulances were. They ended up going a different way than us afterwards. Oh, because we had the Captain. They told her to report to the command post, so those EMT's stayed with ambulances that were staging somewhere else and we responded to the command post with that Captain. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. Which Chief?

A. Mittleman [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and then went back to the command post and ended up at Chelsea staging.

Q. Where was the command post that you are referring to?

A. It was -- I don't even remember where we went. It was on West Street somewhere. It was on West Street somewhere.

J. Murphy

Q. Was it north of Chambers?

A. Yes. At that point we didn't get anywhere back down there until -- I didn't get back down that way until the next day. We stayed up at the Chelsea -- the Chelsea Piers, and the three of us got assigned to do various things there: Assist the doctor who was there in setting up the hospital, in arranging which doctors and nurses were going to work in which areas. Because they set up a whole hospital in the Chelsea Piers and we had various tasks of organizing the medical assistance and stuff like that.

That was it until I went back the next day with the doctor. We actually started walking around the site and looking at what was going on. Telling people that they should put their masks on and that kind of stuff. That filled up the whole next week pretty much.

Q. Any other recollections about the date of the incident? Anything you might have seen that you recall? Any people you might have run into that you recall?

A. I know by the end of the first night -- well, by 10:00 o'clock the first night we had heard

J. Murphy

that all of the people from our office were safe, but that some of them, like the doctors, had lost things like their glasses. Dr. Cherson was working at the ferry terminal without his glasses and he can't see. He's like me. I have contacts on. He had lost his glasses so we don't know how he was working, but he was. But everybody from our office was okay and then we had heard that there were hundreds of firefighters trapped and it was just -- everybody was -- you know, and then you started seeing people from the outer areas. We wondered how they got there so fast. You know, some of these guys were covered in dust and going back in again.

The first hour went so fast for us. It didn't seem, because we had to get from here to the place and then back again. We didn't realize that it had taken so long. It was just like moments, it felt, from the time we left here to the time we were running from the second building coming down. We didn't even know the first one came down. We had no idea when we pulled up that that's what that was.

Q. So it was still burning when you were in Brooklyn?

A. When we came over the Manhattan Bridge,

J. Murphy

you could clearly see both towers standing there burning.

Q. Anything else? Radio transmissions that you recall?

A. No. We took -- we had radios from here with pretty bad batteries. That was on our portables. But the truck radio, we got a truck from -- the actual vehicle radio wasn't very loud and the truck was really loud, and the siren, so I didn't hear. I'm sure there was a transmission about the first building coming down, but we never heard it. And there were three of us in the truck listening to the radio and none of us ever heard it. The first we knew was when Captain Olszewski told us that one of the towers had fallen. That was the first we heard.

Then just before the second tower came down we heard a radio transmission about the second tower is falling. And then the Captain heard the rumbling. We all heard it, but she recognized it for what it was and told us, "Let's get the hell out of here." Because she heard the first one coming down. We never heard that one come down.

Q. Was it a distant rumble or was it really

J. Murphy

loud?

A. It started off distant and got loud and then as we started running the sound sort of disappeared in the background with all the other stuff that I was doing and the sound of the ambulance Engine as I started driving.

Q. Did the cloud of debris ever catch up with you or were you far enough?

A. No. Never caught us. That's why I'm thinking that maybe we never got any farther than Warren Street. Tracey and Dee -- we don't know -- we were talking about it and we couldn't figure out whether we stopped farther down or whether we stopped at Warren Street. We are just not sure whether we got any farther down.

The one thing I do remember is after we stopped running, people were actually -- one guy passed us. Everybody was offering us food, drink. We were sitting treating people and some guy ran past us with three knapsacks. One on his back, one on his chest and one on his hand and he stopped and handed everybody a bottle of water in the ambulance and continued on. We could see the dust cloud and he just ran in with bottles of water.

J. Murphy

Q. A civilian or --

A. A civilian. Other people who were walking away said, he said, "I brought my lunch for work but obviously I'm not going to be working today. Would you like it?" People were offering us stuff all over the place.

A city sheriff came over to us and said, "Do you guys need water to treat people?" We said yes, because we only had the little bottled water in the truck and we knew that wasn't going to last very long. The next thing we know, there is a city sheriff and two other guys with 5-gallon jugs, probably from -- it said "Poland Spring" on it so it must have been a Poland Spring truck. I guess the guy just opened the doors and started giving it out to people. We had huge bottles of water in the truck to rinse people off.

Then people wanted to rinse their mouth out. You can't keep having them all put their mouth on the same thing. Then I went to a little -- a little tiny, hole-in-the-wall deli and asked the guy for a couple of cups and the guy comes out and gives me a whole case of cups. It's gotta cut huge into his profit margin, but he didn't care. He just gave me

J. Murphy

a whole bunch. So then we started giving sleeves of cups to the ambulances that were sitting there.

Then we moved on. That's actually before we moved to the command post.

Captain Olszewski had to actually go into a store and use a phone, because all of our cell phones were dead. I guess there was just so much going on on the radio that she decided not to use the radio, just to call somebody. I'm not sure who she called, but then she said, "You gotta take me to the command post."

Q. Any other recollections?

A. No.

KEVIN MC ALLISTER: Thank you very much.

Interview concluded at 1237 hours on  
October 3, 2001.

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File No. 9110007

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DULCE McCORVEY

Interview Date: October 3, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: This is Lieutenant McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's 1252 hours on October 3rd, 2001. We're in Room 8E13 at Fire Department headquarters, and we're about to interview EMT Dulce McCorvey. I am joined by --

MR. CAMPBELL: Patrick Campbell, fire marshal.

MR. STERACE: Michael Sterace, fire marshal.

MR. McALLISTER: And.

EMT McCORVEY: Dulce McCorvey.

Q. I would just like to draw your attention to September 11th, 2001. Give your recollections from the events of that day.

A. The times are a little blurry. I don't remember -- I know we had gone downstairs. It was like around 8:00, and I went downstairs with someone to get coffee. As we were coming up, everyone was running out of the buildings, the elevators. I almost got run over by a lot of white shirts and a lot of gold.

We came upstairs. Everyone was

running. We walked by OPI. We saw on the TV screen that a plane had already hit the building, the first building. I pulled the job up on the CAD screen, and that's what it said, it was a cargo plane (inaudible).

So at that time I went over to my supervisor. One of the docs and one of the paramedics was going out already. She told us to hang back and wait and see what happened. I don't know exactly what she said.

By the time the second plane hit, I had already gone downstairs, gotten my equipment out of my car that was parked outside on Flatbush Avenue. You could see the smoke coming from the buildings, because you could see the buildings from the back of this building. I could see the smoke coming back -- in the back of the building.

I came upstairs. She said, "We've got to go find an ambulance." There was myself, Jim Murphy and Tracey Mulqueen. We tried calling the different stations. Cumberland down the block, they said to come down and get an ambulance.

We got in my car, all the equipment and the three of us, and drove to Cumberland. They

couldn't give us an ambulance. The captain said they didn't have any available at the moment. We went down to Woodhull. We went through a lot of traffic. We finally got an ambulance. It wasn't stocked or anything. So that delayed us a bit.

We got in the ambulance, and we drove down to the Brooklyn Bridge or the Manhattan Bridge. I don't remember which bridge we took.

Q. Did you have a radio with you?

A. We had a radio. We had a portable radio. The battery died, so we couldn't get any communications out. The KDT in the ambulance was broken, so we couldn't log on. So we were getting -- I don't remember hearing what they were saying, because I was sitting in the back of the ambulance, and Tracey and Jimmy were sitting in the front. I couldn't really hear what they were saying.

We were listening to citywide, and there was a lot of communication. I couldn't tell what it was. We had the siren on, and there was a lot of confusion trying to get around traffic, people trying to get on the bridge, people blocking us.

It was the Manhattan Bridge. We got off the Manhattan Bridge, because I remember getting off at Canal.

Q. There was a lot of non-emergency traffic on the bridge?

A. Yeah. Well, no, they were blocking off the bridge.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. They were diverting them, so it was hard getting onto the bridge. When we finally did get on the bridge, the bridge was here. So it was the Manhattan Bridge.

I don't know what road we went down, because I couldn't see too clearly. We ended up on Broadway. We were speeding down Broadway following -- there were traffic cops directing everybody go down that way. So we followed them.

We were going down Broadway. I don't know exactly at what point we stopped on Broadway. We saw a captain that I knew her from the academy, and she was full of dust. We didn't know where we were going. We were looking for the incident command center. We really didn't know. We were just going towards the building.

When we saw her, we pulled over to help her. She was saying an explosion -- she didn't say the building went down; she said she was under the building when the plane went down. That's what I remember. We tried to calm her down, because she was upset.

Then we heard this loud noise like another plane. That's what we thought it was, another plane. It was a real loud rumbling. I can hear a lot of people screaming. We didn't know what it was, and we turned around and saw people running the opposite way on Broadway, running north on Broadway. We could see this big, black cloud of smoke coming up. I said, "Oh, shit."

We turned around, and Janice says, "Run!" So we ran. We started running. We turned around and ran. Janice ran, and Tracey was running, and Jimmy was right behind us. I didn't see where Jimmy was. I stopped and screamed, "Jimmy!" I didn't see him. He had gone back and gotten the ambulance and turned around.

He pulled us into the ambulance. We

ran into the ambulance. All I could see is behind, because I was in the back of the bus. All I could see is this big cloud of smoke coming and people just coming out from inside this cloud of smoke. You could see from the side streets, like you could see smoke coming down the side streets, swelling up the road.

So we just kept on going. At one point we slowed down and we stopped in front of 26 Federal Plaza. I said, "We can't stop here. We've got to keep on going." So we kept on going, and we went up close to Canal Street. I don't know what street we stopped on. We stopped there.

Q. During that time when you were on Broadway and heading north on Broadway, did you notice any fire apparatus?

A. I saw no fire apparatus. I saw no firemen at all.

Q. Any other EMS vehicles?

A. I saw two other EMS vehicles. Where we had finally stopped, there were two other EMS vehicles. Two guys came out. They were running. They came out without the ambulance. They work

in Manhattan, I'm pretty sure. They said they weren't in shock. One of them was crying. I can't remember his last name.

He said there were two patients in the back of his bus. They were strapped to a long board. He had to run, and the building fell on the ambulance. So I don't remember (inaudible). I know the guy -- I can't remember his name. They were pretty upset.

Everybody coming out was cops. There were a lot of cops coming out, all full of that white dust. There were a lot of people screaming, crying, hurt, a lot of cuts and bruises.

We stayed there for a while. I don't know how long.

Q. That's near Canal Street on Broadway?

A. Yeah, because I could see Canal up the block, and we were on Broadway.

I don't know the times, really. Now it's like a blur, like a million years ago.

We treated people as they needed to be treated, and we tried to help where we could. Somebody brought us water, a big jug of water.



Just a lot of cops were coming up. I don't know what precinct they were from.

From then Janice said she's got to find a command center, so we started going toward the west side and went towards West Street.

Q. Janice is the captain?

A. Yeah.

Q. Olszewski; right?

A. Olszewski, right.

So we went up to West Street. On West Street there was a lot of commotion. There was a lot of units. I saw firemen walking, a lot of firemen walking. They were walking up, all covered in soot. There were trucks going down. I couldn't tell you what the companies were.

I saw an EMS captain and an EMS chief. We went up to them, and we saw one of our medical directors. I saw units from Bellevue.

Q. Do you know any of their names?

A. The medic unit was Artie Gonzalez and Al Siegel. They're a medic unit from Bellevue. I saw Dr. Richmond. I saw him. I saw Chief Mittleman and Captain -- I can't think of his name.

Q. Where did you see them?

A. West Street at West Street.

Q. West Street and --

A. West Street and -- I have no idea.

West Street. It was below Chelsea Piers, way below Chelsea Piers.

Q. Was it south of Canal, do you think?

A. It was south of Canal.

Q. On West south of Canal?

A. Yeah. But I don't know names.

Q. How close to the site?

A. All I could see is a lot of smoke, so I really don't know how close I was to the site. Maybe Barclay Street? Maybe that far down, Barclay Street?

Q. Did they tell you they were coming from the site?

A. No, they didn't say that. We just went up to the chief and told them that Janice was under the building when the plane hit [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Then he said, "Well," to the captain,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We couldn't get out of the city, so we ended up at NYU [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. [REDACTED]?

A. Yeah.

[REDACTED] We saw a couple of cops in the hospital. Actually we saw a lot of cops with injuries in the hospital, minor, not serious.

We went to Bellevue to gas up, and as we're gassing up we hear that loud rumble again. The three of us knew already to hide under the ambulance or go into the garage, because we didn't know what it was. We thought another building was going to come down or another jet was coming. But the fighter jets were flying over Manhattan. We're like, are they ours?

After that we went back. We had seen Dr. Richmond, and Dr. Richmond said, "Come back here." We ended up here. We went back to Chelsea Piers, and we ended up in Chelsea Piers. We were trying to find Dr. Richmond. We didn't see him right away, but we saw a lot of ambulances.

The people I saw I know from Manhattan. Most of the people I know were Manhattan ambulances. I didn't see any fire trucks. Police cars, I just saw police cars blocking the entrance going down that way towards the Piers.

While we were at the pier, they were setting up the hospital. We were in there for a while. Then we finally caught up with Dr. Richmond. He said to help out with the volunteers. There were a lot of volunteers coming up that wanted to help.

So we set up with the medical volunteers and tried to set them up and tried to get their names down and see if they could come, they could stay. We didn't know what the situation was.

Around I think it was maybe 4 or 5:00,

one of the cops said that the buildings were collapsing still and there were people still in need. They were pulling out anybody from the area. So we just told the docs to hang out, the volunteers to hang out and wait and see what happens.

We just helped set up blood donations. People wanted to come and donate blood. People wanted to come and help and do anything they could. So we just helped set that up a little bit.

Q. Did you treat anybody?

A. Not there, not at the Chelsea Piers we didn't treat anybody. Later at night, maybe 11:00, we had like a bus load of cops that came in from ground zero. They were treated in the hospital. Maybe about 10, 15. Then after that we started getting a couple bus loads. We saw some firefighters come in. I don't know where they were from. It seemed like everybody was from all over the place.

I stayed there until about 1:00 and then hitched a ride with an ambulance. I was going back to the academy, and then I went home.

That's pretty much it. I really didn't see any firemen. I saw fire trucks. I remember seeing fire trucks coming down that way from West Street to Chelsea Piers.

Q. Any other recollections, things that you may have observed that were odd or unusual or just things that you recall that you can tell us about?

A. Unusual in what sense? The whole day was unusual. I don't know.

The things that stick out in my mind is the fire in the towers when we were going down. In my car we were going down towards the station, and we could see the fire in the towers. The cloud of smoke coming towards us.

Just standing at Chelsea Piers and not seeing the towers. A lot of police, a lot of Secret Service, a lot of ambulances. People from every voluntary hospital that you could think of was down there, from all over. Fire trucks from volunteer fire departments were down there, ones that I know, from all over, as well as from God knows where, towns I never heard of before. A lot of people coming down. If you needed water,

you asked for water, they gave you water. You ask for a bottle of water, and you got a jug of water.

MR. McALLISTER: I'm going to conclude the interview. It is now 1306 hours, and we are going to conclude the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110009

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT MURRAY MURAD

Interview Date: October 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MR. CAMPBELL: Today is October 4th at 10:30 in the morning. We're in conference room 4E21 at headquarters. My name is Patrick Campbell, Fire Marshal, here to conduct an interview with Murray Murad about the occurrence of September 11th.

Also present in the room is --

MR. STARACE: Michael Starace, Fire Marshal.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Murray Murad, Lieutenant Investigator with Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. Okay, Murray, we're just coming here and trying to do a fact-finding mission of what you saw on September 11th in the morning of the plane crash and the incident that happened at the World Trade Center. Just tell us what you saw and did that day.

A. Well, I was conducting business down on Greenwich and Liberty at Engine 10, Truck 10, on that day. I happened to walk through the quarters around 8:35 and I asked to speak to the officer in charge of the truck -- I think that was Captain Mallery; I think it's

M-A-L-L-E-R-Y -- I needed to speak to one of the firemen. It so happens who I was looking for, the firefighter was there.

So we went upstairs and we started to prepare the paperwork. I was conducting a confidential investigation at the fire house. It was about 8:41 that we heard a plane hovering over the fire house. It sounded like the plane was right on top of us. At that time the captain was upstairs. He was taking a shower in the office and I was conducting the work with the firefighter.

The captain came out and said: "What's going on? This is a no-fly zone. There should be no planes over here unless this is a military plane, a plane in trouble." Other than that, there was really no clue.

So about two or three minutes after hearing it, you heard something like revving. We took a look, and, boom, the north tower is hit. So what happened was everyone left the house except for the captain, because he already had his relief. What I'm assuming is that he's going to man the house. His relief was there.

They all took off. The engine and the truck took off I guess they both were responding to a pre-arranged staging location when the World Trade Center is involved in some kind of major incident. And they all took off.

So what happened was people were running out of the building. We got a couple of injuries. We were treating them.

Q. Out of the building, out of the Trade Center?

A. Out of the Trade Center, yeah. I don't know which Trade Center building they came out of, but it was either the north or the south building.

It was very minimal, like five, six patients. They came with very, very minor injuries. There was a police officer in the fire house. I asked him: Listen, can you get an ambulance here, we have a couple minor injuries. We need an ambulance at the staging location here.

The ambulance comes in. The first EMT that walks in, he sprained his ankle. So he was not much of a help, but he tried to get these

people as comfortable as possible.

Let me go back. Let me go back one second before this. After the first plane hit, we went downstairs after everyone took off. I was there downstairs for maybe seven, eight minutes.

I went back upstairs because I wanted to get something out of my bag. Maybe about 10 to 12-minutes after that first plane, I heard another plane. Then I said to myself, we're being attacked.

I ran downstairs. No sooner did I run downstairs and look up, that I saw the second plane strike the south tower. It was such a vicious hit and such a precision hit, it was unbelievable.

Still we didn't have that many more people coming into the fire house, just regular civilians hanging around. They were looking at everything else like that. So pretty much everything was pretty much stabilized in the fire house. The captain was still the only one there.

At that point there were two fire marshals that came to the house. They wanted to

borrow some equipment. I can't identify who they were. I forget what they looked like. They got some gear from the house and then they took off. So I only saw them for a second. I only determined they were fire marshals because they had their jackets on.

So at this point what I did was I went around the corner to Liberty and Greenwich to tell the people listen, just keep walking, just keep walking as far as you can, just stay away from the buildings.

I got to the American Stock Exchange building. A guy came out and asked me what do you think we should do? I said listen, if it was me, I tell you in one word, R-U-N, run, just leave. Oh, we have a protocol, for this and that. Listen, you've to get your people to safety. I don't think being in the building is that safe. But this is the American Stock Exchange. I said listen, you do what you have to do. We have a couple of retired cops on the job here. So one of them called me over. I told him the same story. I said listen, you guys need to get out of here, just for safety reasons. Again,

he told me that they have their protocol that they do.

So I continued on my little excursion here trying to get people out of the stores, out of the buildings. I went to all of the shops right behind the fire house. I said listen, just leave your building, just leave.

Q. This is on Greenwich Street?

A. Yeah, right on Greenwich and Liberty, right behind the fire house, right on -- is it Cider or Cedar?

Q. Cedar?

A. Cedar. They have all the little coffee shops there, bagel stores, gourmet shops there with all the foods. I told them just leave, just -- don't even close your business, just walk out and leave. They're telling me they're okay, they're okay. Now it's getting a little frustrating because I said listen, you should really leave. Don't lock your door, but let your employees go. That didn't seem to work.

So I went back into the fire house to see what I could do. The EMS unit was trying to treat a couple of people. We had a guy with a

broken leg, possibly, and maybe one patient with second degree burns but nothing life-threatening. All the injuries in the fire house were minor. There were really no life-threatening injuries.

So in a matter of 15, 20 minutes, the captain yelled out and you heard this roar. All he said was run to the back, it's coming down. And we all started running to the back of the fire house.

I know the design of Engine 10, Truck 10. It's on the corner, pretty wide. Then as you go into the house it narrows into the hallway. It has a phone. It has a TV room. Then it has a bathroom and a kitchen, which I totally forgot about, the kitchen during the collapse.

Everyone's running down to the basement or upstairs. One of the firefighters, who must have come in when they were calling all these guys in, I don't know who they were, said go upstairs, go upstairs. A lot of people didn't want to go upstairs because they were afraid. The building is coming down upstairs.

So as we were running, we were picking

up the injured people. They would fall, we would stop, two people pick them up.

Q. Still in the house?

A. Still in the house. Then it came down. From the implosion, we all got thrown and all that stuff came in the house, all that debris, all that concrete and all that fiberglass. Name it, it was in there. It was incredible. Then it started getting dark, darker. You couldn't even see in front of you.

Q. Inside?

A. Inside the fire house. You couldn't even see. I couldn't even see in front of my face. Then it became very, very black. We were trying to get out the door. The back entrance was blocked with all the rubble. Somehow they were able to get the door open. Again I think most of us forgot about the kitchen. We were all trying to go out through the back. So everyone I think got out.

So what happened was I got out and I went to see what was going on. It was a nightmare. Cars were tossed. I mean, all that stuff was in the air, on the street.



So I walked up to Trinity Place. It just so happens I needed a mask, you know. I happened to see Matty James who was in a Jeep. I said Matty, you got a mask? He said: "I have a couple of Scott packs." I didn't want to take one because they had a couple of fire trucks that were hanging out right in front of him. I don't know what fire trucks they were, but they looked kind of beaten up from the explosion.

Q. This was on where?

A. On Trinity Place.

Q. On Trinity?

A. And Cedar.

Q. Cedar.

A. Right, right up there.

Q. They were parked there, and they were smashed?

A. I don't know if they were really smashed, but there was a lot of debris on them. I only saw one or two. I can't really identify them because there was so much debris in the air and on the ground. The pictures that you see, that's what was going on.

So he said to me: "Hop in my car, I'll

give you a ride, because there's a cop, he's giving out masks on the corner." Meanwhile I can't see, my eyes are so red and irritated and I'm coughing up all the soot and everything. So I got a mask from the cop.

Then there was like a little cappuccino store right there. I knocked on the door and was let in. Listen, can I use your facilities here? He said oh, yeah, come on in, wash up. I just wanted to wash my face and get all that stuff out of my eyes. He said hey, have some water. He gave me a bottle of water. I was there about 15 minutes. Then I started walking out.

I walked about two, three minutes, and all of a sudden I heard a plane. Now, I'm like the only one walking on this block. I said oh, my God, we're being attacked again. Someone said it could have been a B15, a U.S. plane up in the air. Actually, what I think it was, was simultaneously the plane and the north tower coming down. So that's what the sounds were. I heard that rumble.

So I started going back to the area where Liberty Street was. I went up to Liberty

Street. Everything's destroyed, everything, all the buildings around it. The only thing standing was the fire house.

I re-entered the fire house. I spotted a chief. I think it was Philip Burns only because someone called his name. A couple of firemen were in there. There was Firefighter Peter D'Ancona. He was there. He was assigned there. I saw him. He was looking for gear. There was no gear to be found for these guys, no turn-out coats, no nothing. Everything was gone.

Guys were coming in. A couple of companies were coming in just trying to assist. It was still dark out.

What happened was everybody got out of the house safely. I asked the captain where is everybody? He said everyone's out, everyone's fine, everyone's good. There was nothing else to do. Then I spotted the two EMTs that were assigned to the location. I said listen, I have a car --

Q. Do you remember their names?

A. No, I don't. The ambulance was destroyed in the collapse. I don't know if it

was totaled, but there was a lot of damage to the vehicle.

Q. Where was that vehicle?

A. It was parked right inside the 10 and 10 house.

Q. On the side?

A. Right inside.

Q. Oh, inside?

A. Inside, right. They backed it up. I don't know if they were going to do triage or going to transport.

Q. How did the ambulance get damaged?

A. All the debris from the collapse of --

Q. So it was outside?

A. It was inside. From the implosion, everything just came inside.

Q. The doors were open?

A. The doors were open.

Q. Oh, the doors were open?

A. Yeah. They should have been closed, but I don't think -- no one expected within an hour the collapse. It was an awful thing.

Q. Where did you park?

A. I parked down on Greenwich between -- I

think it's Carlisle and Rector. That's where I was parked.

Q. So you were down a little further?

A. Yeah. Because what happened was when I got to the house it was almost changing shifts and I didn't want to take a parking spot up, because they double park there and everywhere right around the corner. It was still early. I said you know what, let me just park up further. I found a spot, I pulled the car in, and then I just walked up to the fire house.

Q. You never made it to the towers? You never went near the towers?

A. No, that was just from my location of being right at 10 and 10. That was the closest I was.

Q. Philip Burns was in there during that whole time?

A. I only saw him when I came back after the second tower collapsed. I'm only saying it was Philip Burns because someone said that was Chief Burns.

Q. That was after the second?

A. After the second collapse.

Q. When the first one was hit, you were outside?

A. No, I was almost in front of the house at the front doors. The doors were open.

Q. Which is actually right across the street?

A. Right across the street. It was on Liberty and Greenwich.

Q. You looked up and you saw the --

A. I didn't look up. What happened was the captain just -- we heard a roar, and he just yelled out it's coming down, just run to the back of the fire house.

Q. Oh, no, when it hit -- did you see it -- were you outside when it hit?

A. No.

Q. You were inside?

A. Yeah. We just heard all the rumble and all -- the collapse.

Q. I'm saying you were in the house when the first plane hit?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you go out at all right after it?

A. When the first plane hit? I did. I

went outside.

Q. What did you see then?

A. I just saw the fire -- the smoke coming out from the top from the north tower.

Q. Was there any debris?

A. Not at that time.

Q. No debris at all?

A. No. Stuff was coming down, but nothing real major. After the second plane hit even more stuff came down.

Q. I'm sorry, when the second plane hit.

A. When the second plane hit, it was just a lot of fire, a lot of black smoke.

Q. Coming out?

A. Right. What happened was that we looked up and then within a couple of minutes one guy jumped -- an individual came out. It wasn't like a jump, because they came out backwards. Evidently from the explosion up on those floors they got blown out. Someone else came down and they were coming out. I only saw two people come out.

Now we had more people congregating in the fire house. We would just evaluate them, if

they were injured. No, we're not injured. We need a phone.

Of course the cell phones were not working. The only cell phone that worked I think was Nextel. It's a two-way portable radio, practically, and you can have contact. You don't even have to worry about dialing. That's the only phones that were working.

Everyone's cell phones were just not working. My cell phone was dead. The beepers were dead. Everything in the fire house was dead. There was no communication whatsoever. So we just relied on whatever information we were able to get, which was actually really nothing.

Q. Were there a lot of plane parts or anything when the second one hit?

A. Not that I saw, no.

Q. You said there were firemen around you. Did you hear any transmissions going on?

A. No. It was all verbal among the firemen just discussing. The radio communication was fairly -- I didn't hear anything.

MR. CAMPBELL: Do you have anything else, Mike?



Q. Anybody else you actually recognized?

A. I recognized the captain. I recognized one of the firefighters. I recognized a lieutenant that was from BHS. I don't know his last name. His first name is John. He was good friends with Geoff Guja. Actually they went down together. Geoff unfortunately didn't make it.

Q. You don't remember the fireman's name?

A. No, that was with him? I don't remember.

Q. Captain Mallery, he stayed in the fire house the whole time?

A. I believe so.

Q. Anything else? Is there anything else you want to add? You can say anything about how you felt or whatever.

A. It was something that if you were there, to describe it, it was horrible. It was a horrific act against us. It was something that you would never, ever think would ever, ever happen to this country.

When those towers came down, it was like a sign of something. When all these people -- I mean, war is war. They talk about

Pearl Harbor. Bottom line is Pearl Harbor was a military base, installation. It was peace time.

But here what happened was we got two planes, our own planes, going into two towers and killing almost 5,000 people. It was just an awful day. It was day I'll never forget, just the sounds of everything and the planes hitting. The awful sound of hearing that plane over the fire house. It was like it was sitting right on top of the fire house. That's how close it was. And then revving up the engine and then hitting the north tower.

Q. You had said earlier people in the fire house were alarmed when they heard the plane. They felt something was wrong?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. Before it even --

A. I was upstairs. There was only the captain and the firefighter. It was George Bachmann who was up there with me. George Bachmann was in Vietnam -- served in Vietnam. So he knows certain sounds. Like we said, this is a no-fly zone here. What's a plane doing here?

So as soon as that plane hit, they all

took off. The only one left was the captain at the time. Anybody else coming back, coming into the house was either called in or off-duty guys coming in, grabbing equipment. I saw the two fire marshals. They were grabbing equipment. They asked the captain: "We need some gear."

But again, no one ever expected it to collapse like that. Just thankfully a pancake rather than toppling over. That would have been a nightmare. But in an hour the intensity of that heat must have been incredible.

Q. Did any of the guys from 10 and 10 come back after --

A. They were out. I understand that a lot of them didn't come back.

Q. So none of them came back after, while you were around?

A. No, no. They, I think, just went to the location where they were supposed to go and whatever assignment they were given. The problem was when the south tower went down, I guess there was no communication and people just went into the north tower. That's what they were saying.

When the south tower came down, that

was where the communication was. While the north tower is still up, burning, guys were just told go into the building. There was no radio communication. That's what --

Q. You were by the south tower?

A. Right.

Q. After that got hit, were there any firefighters going into Two World Trade from Liberty Street or anything?

A. No, they just -- everyone just got in and they went to --

Q. No, I'm saying when the second one hit when they were responding when they made the other alarm for the second tower.

A. Right.

Q. Units were assigned to the second tower or the south tower. Did you see any of them go in?

A. No, no. Actually I didn't see any units from where I was. They must have all gone to Vesey or they were parked on Church right up on the street. I saw some fire apparatus up on, I think it was, Church or Trinity or right up there on Liberty Street.

Q. Did you see any numbers or anything?

A. No.

MR. CAMPBELL: All right. This concludes the interview. It's 10:52. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110010

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC TRACEY MULQUEEN

Interview Date: October 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 4th, 2001. We're at Fire Department headquarters in 8E13, and we're about to begin an interview with Tracey Mulqueen, who's a paramedic assigned to the office of medical affairs.

I'm joined by --

MR. CASTORINA: Ron Castorina, Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

MR. TAMBASCO: Mike Tambasco, Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

MR. McALLISTER: Tracey Mulqueen as well.

Q. We're just going to draw your attention to September the 11th and ask you for your recollections about the events of that day.

A. I guess to start with, the first time I started hearing -- I was actually in the pantry making breakfast. I started to hear people screaming. The first thought was that there was a bird in reception, like a bird had flown in or something. I don't know where that came from.

I went out to see what was going on,

and I went to the eighth floor reception and I could see the flames and the smoke coming out of the first tower in the Trade Center. It was surreal. It's like you're seeing it but you're not really processing it.

I was watching for a few minutes, and the second plane came in. Basically the next thing I remember after that was we had all of our office's medical equipment on a chair and we were running out the building.

They had somehow worked out for us to get an ambulance at one of the battalions in Brooklyn. So we ran to somebody's personal car, because we didn't even try to get a pool car. We figured all the pool cars were probably gone at that point, which I wouldn't be surprised if they were.

So we're driving through Brooklyn, and three of us -- it was myself, James Murphy, who's another paramedic, and Dulce McCorvey, who is an EMT in the office. So we go into her personal car with all the equipment, and we're driving and we're hoping we don't get lost.

Again, we're in a personal vehicle.



I'm basically stopping at the red lights. I'm jumping out of the car, stopping traffic so we can drive through, because we just needed to get there. I probably shouldn't be telling this to the BITS people, but anyway.

Q. We've heard this story before.

A. I know.

Just trying to stop. People looked at us like what's going on. I guess people didn't know yet. We were listening to the radio, the regular AM radio -- I forget what station it was -- and starting to hear the reports about what's going on.

So we get an ambulance, we throw our stuff in it, and we start heading over to Manhattan. We were driving and we come over -- I think we came over the Manhattan Bridge and went around City Hall. We were driving down Broadway, and there was no AM/FM radio in the ambulance, so we had no idea what was going on at this point.

Q. What were you able to observe as you came over the bridge and after you entered Manhattan?

A. Just there was a lot of cops. There

was a lot of activity. I really wasn't seeing people, like the hordes of people like you see on the news. I think we were more concerned about going the right way and not getting lost. I was in the passenger seat of the ambulance, so I was kind of copiloting at that point.

We started to come down Broadway, and we could start to see people coming up at us, just all types of pedestrians, walking only in one direction. Like I said, we didn't have a radio in our ambulance, and nothing had come over the regular FD radio. So we didn't even know the first tower had collapsed at that point, and we were driving straight in. We had no clue.

One of the captains from operations, Janice Olszewski, if she hadn't stopped us, we probably would have been right underneath the tower when it came down. We had no idea what was going on.

We were coming down Broadway, and I'm not sure exactly where we ended up but I believe we were probably at Broadway and Vesey. We were probably right about here. She had flagged us down. We got out of the ambulance. We started

talking to her. You could see that she had that look in her eye. She told us that the tower had come down.

Literally within like maybe a minute or two of being on the scene, you could start to hear the rumble again. Everybody just said, "Get out of here!" Everybody just took off running.

Q. That was the rumble from the second tower?

A. It was, definitely, because you could start to see the dust cloud was starting to come at us and everything. We were running up Broadway, and I don't know how he did this, because all I thought was just get the hell out of here. I had Captain Olszewski in my sight, and I had Dulce McCorvey in my sight, and we were together. I had no idea where Jimmy Murphy went.

The next thing you know, the ambulance comes up Broadway. "Get in!" Cool. So we all jumped in, and we just all sat in the back. You could see the dust clouds coming at us and going down the side streets.

Q. You were moving, you were driving?

A. Oh, yeah. So we actually beat out that

cloud, because there's no way you could have driven through that. We were driving, and we stopped at one point and we looked and saw that we were outside the federal building. We ain't stopping here. So we went a few more blocks up.

I remember Janice Olszewski just sitting there screaming, "Keep going. We're not far enough. We're not far enough. Just keep going." We just were all sitting in the back of the ambulance, what the hell just happened. I don't think it really even sunk in.

We knew something had happened. I don't think we realized like the whole thing had come down, because we didn't even know -- she had said that something had collapsed, there was some kind of explosion, I don't know. We just got out, we stopped, and all of a sudden people just started coming out, all covered in the ash.

Q. Where did you stop?

A. I know we were outside of 385 Broadway at one point, because there was a lingerie shop there and the guy was so nice. He let us come in, let us use the bathroom, let us use the phones. I know the deli next had asked people

for quarters to use the phones, which I could not believe. This guy was like, "Whatever you need. What can I do?" He was just amazing. I'm going to make a point to go back there and thank him, because he was absolutely wonderful.

I think we all sat down on the back of the bumper. We were trying to get dust masks, and we gave out all of our masks within a couple of minutes, because everybody was coming up. You could smell it. It's not a regular smoke smell. It's acrid concrete, whatever. We gave out dust masks.

Then within I guess a couple minutes, people started coming out, making their way out of that cloud. There were some injuries. A lot of just completely petrified, shell-shocked -- I guess when you see pictures of people from other parts of the world after bombings and stuff, that shell-shocked look.

When you see people in New York in business suits coming out covered in ash, looking like that, the whole thing -- surreal is definitely the only word that describes a lot of what went on that day, and afterwards too.

I know after a few minutes some guy came up, and he must have just run to the first deli he could find and bought all the water he could fit in his backpack and just came by and just started giving out water to people, which was -- I guess that was the beginning of people coming together and trying to do the right thing. People came by and bought sandwiches in a store and just tried to give us stuff. Somebody finally came by and was giving out like bottles of water, like the five gallon ones.

Actually, this is interesting, just to go back. When we were driving up Broadway before we actually got there, there was a sheriff's car, and my husband is a deputy sheriff in the New York City sheriff's office. As we were driving by, I yelled at them, "Tell Paul Mulqueen that his wife is here."

Because afterwards, maybe about half an hour, all I could think of is I know my husband works in Manhattan, I know he was there. I'm trying to focus on what I need to do, and people coming up cut and having trouble breathing. We had a few different oxygen bags and regulators

and stuff. You go into auto pilot and you try to do what you have to do, and all I could think about was where's Paul, where's Paul. Nobody could get through on the cell phones.

I guess probably about 12-ish I saw another sheriff, and I said, "Could you please just try and raise him on the radio." He called him. Finally all I heard back, "What?" I thought, okay, he's okay, which I thought was very funny. The guy was like, "Lord, there was a family member looking for you." You could hear like the relief in his voice, and he was like, "Okay." But it was like "What?"

I found out later he was helping to evacuate the fire. There was a picture. He was in like Time magazine and Newsweek magazine evacuating some of the victims out. I understand where that "what" came from at that point, but it was the happiest word I heard.

I don't know how long we were there, but we were there for a while trying to just catch people as they were coming out, people were being carried out, limping up. Everybody was pretty banged up, although not as banged up as I

expected. I think a lot of us really expected worse injuries. It seemed like people were mostly either walking wounded or they didn't get out. It's unfortunate.

Q. What street were you getting these injuries at?

A. We were still in front of 385 Broadway.

Q. On Broadway?

A. Yeah, which I think is just south of Canal Street.

It's funny, because the whole time too you don't realize how often you use the twin towers as your reference point, because for the next couple days I would look and I had no idea where I was. I would go to look up to see where the towers were. I guess that's something I'll have to get used to, but it was very strange.

I know once --

Q. Were there other units there at that time?

A. There was one other ambulance there. I think it was from the academy, because I know like Marlena Coffey was there and Jenna, she's from the academy. She was with a couple of other



people and some other EMTs that were closer that didn't get out of the cloud had come up. I know one guy's name was Kevin. He was covered in ash.

I think after once we kind of got control of the scene there, everybody was just to the phone to try and call people, to just let them know that we're okay. I know when I got in touch with my aunt, she was hysterical, which started me off, the last thing you want.

We were told to 85 with one of the deputy medical directors, so we met up with him at wherever that first treatment sector was on the West Side Highway there. There was all the ambulances, and all other people started coming in. I saw ambulances from New Jersey. My friend lives on North Shore. This funky big ambulance thing. I never saw a truck like it.

We met up with Dr. Richmond, which apparently he and Commissioner Clair and Dario Gonzalez, the two physicians and the commissioner, were flown in from the state police from Albany, which was good.

At that point Captain Olszewski was who we kept with. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] T. MULQUEEN [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I remember what struck me most is when we were on the east side and stuck in all that traffic, people were just going about their day. People were sitting at cafes eating. I know life goes on and stuff, but to see people -- it was almost like how could you just be going about your business? Don't you know what just happened?

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I saw her I don't know when, a couple days later. I had slept here a couple nights, and I ran into her one night. It was good to see

people. I never hugged so many people that I worked with in the space of a couple of days, ever.

From the hospital we went to Bellevue to restock, because our bus was trashed. They had everything set up outside for restock. We had no oxygen, we had no masks, we had no water left for doing people's eyes and stuff. We were flushing them out. We had no gas. It was like everything you could run out of, we ran out of.

We were standing at Bellevue. All of a sudden we hear this rumble of like a plane really low, and I started to freak out. Jimmy Murphy said, "It's okay. It's an F-15." I've never heard an F-15 before. I don't go to air shows or anything.

But that plane and the rumble, especially because you hadn't heard a plane since; maybe a helicopter or two. But that sound, that was -- and just to see all these fighter jets over New York City was very, very strange.

So then we restocked, and we were sent to Chelsea Piers. We pretty much spent the rest

of our night there. Actually how did I get to Chelsea Piers? Honestly I don't know where we went after Bellevue. All I know is at some point I got hooked up with Dr. Richmond and we ended up at Chelsea Piers. I don't know how I got there. Okay. That's pretty interesting.

Q. It's common that people have gaps, because a lot of people don't recall big chunks of time from that day.

A. I have no idea what I did. The next thing I know, it was nighttime and we were at Chelsea Piers and we were helping -- we got the morgue set up, which actually they never used, on the ice rink, which I thought it was actually a good idea.

Yeah, just getting everything set up, all the hospitals, getting all the people -- everyone was just rushing in. Everybody knows about how many people we had volunteering their time, and just stuff, equipment.

I remember at one point an unmarked truck pulls outside Chelsea Piers, and they start unloading it. You see just big brown boxes. I'm like, "Guys, I know I'm Miss Panic here, but did

anybody check those boxes? Where is this stuff from? It could be terrorist stuff." The FEMA guy standing next to me says, "Oh, maybe we should check the truck out." I was like oh, my God, you know. Who knew at that point? He was like, "Wow, that's a good idea."

At some point that night, we went to go check out some of the -- I went with Dr. Richmond to ground zero from Chelsea, and I got to see a little bit of it. Words can't describe. You can see all the pictures and all the footage. I don't know if you guys were there or not, but it just looks like the gates of hell opened up. I've heard that from other people too. You can't describe that.

Then we went back up, and we were finishing coordinating. I actually got home the first night, because my husband came and picked me up. That was good. That was very good. I was very, very thankful, very thankful. We're both the same type of people, we're there.

I know my parents were in Walt Disney World, and they shut the whole park and wouldn't tell people why they started shutting people out.

A guy had a radio and told my parents, and my mom just flipped, because she knows where I work. She knows that when big things happen, we're out the door first.

The only reason why I wasn't out the door with Dr. Cherson and Manny Delgado was because I was making my frigging bacon in the pantry. Who knows what would have happened had I been there.

You hear all these stories. There were so many people that were just lucky because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time or the right place at the right time. That's two things: I had my bacon saved me, hopefully, and then Janice Olszewski stopping us in the middle of Broadway before we drove right into the thing. I'm very lucky and very happy.

I came back the next morning, and I had met up with Dr. Cherson at that point. I spent the next couple of days with him. That's a very big blur. All I know is that by the end of the day I could barely walk, my feet hurt so much. My big toes are still numb now, because we were just on our feet for so many hours. The next

couple days I ended up just sleeping up here in one of the doc's offices.

Oh, wait, no, I forgot this one. The next day we were -- after we were helping the setup -- they were setting up the northwest triage and treatment sector in the American Express building all of a sudden you started to hear that rumble again. Everybody just took off.

Q. This is on the 12th?

A. Yes. Apparently in the back some of the facade had been falling down, but you didn't know that. All you know is you heard that rumble again. We were all running. All of a sudden we're like "we're not far enough," which we heard a lot of them.

All of sudden I see one of our EMTs coming up towards West Street, and he's starting to go in the building. I started screaming, "Get out of there!" One of the cops turned around and said, "Why are you screaming?" "Because you know what, I just ran for my frigging life again. If I'm a little high-strung right now, then you're going to have to understand that."

This guy was going back in the



building. He's like, "Oh, okay. All right."  
Why are you screaming? Because he's walking  
towards a building that might be collapsing? I  
don't know, you know. It was just funny.

We moved back, and then they checked it  
out. You see the back corner had collapsed a  
little bit. But they checked it out. Apparently  
the building was -- they used it for a triage and  
then the morgue. I think it's still being used,  
actually. I think the DMAT teams are in there  
now.

I don't know what else you're looking  
for.

Q. That's great.

A. Kind of a rambling story.

Q. That's what we're looking for. We're  
looking for your recollections, a narrative from  
you as to what you observed. We appreciate that.

A. I'm just meeting people. I met one  
guy, one of my old partners, and he was off. He  
said his whole fire company's gone, the whole  
company. Just running into people like that.  
When you look at people that you're not going to  
see again, it's hard. It's very difficult.

Thank you.

Q. Thank you very much for your recollections.

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McAllister again. It is 12:12 on October 4th, 2001, and we're going to conclude the interview now. The interview started at 11:52 hours.

File No. 9110012

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FELIPE TORRE

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

F. TORRE

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 9, 2001. The time now is 714 hours a.m. This is Lieutenant Monte Feiler with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and command?

A. Felipe Torre, EMT, Battalion 50.

Q. At Battalion 50, New York City Fire Department, EMS command, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

EMT Torre, if you can just begin and give me a scenario of where you were during the time frame of September 11 in the morning.

A. That morning I started to do a second tour of overtime. We were coming out of New York Hospital Queens. We had just taken a patient there and we were redeployed to the World Trade Center incident. We gave the dispatcher an update when we got there and we made it to Broadway and Murray Street and that is as far as you could go, because we were stopped by numerous police personnel and civilians because a lot of people that were hurt and needed assistance. We radioed in and I notified the dispatcher, the Citywide dispatcher, that we were not able to make it to the staging area.

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My partner and I, we got out, took our equipment, and you know, we separated. He attended to some patients and I attended to another. In the process of helping other people, over the radio we also heard that the second tower was hit. A lot of pandemonium, a lot of people were really scared. So was I. We were trying to help as much and control as much people as we can.

Then the first -- one of the towers fell down.

Q. Did you see that?

A. Yes. We were trying to help a couple of people into the ambulance and we got caught up in all that debris, you know.

Q. Did you at any point go into any of the buildings?

A. I was tending to some people at the CitiBank on Broadway and Murray.

Q. They were being brought to you?

A. They, the police stopped us. I think a couple of bank managers also were out and they hailed us. I believe I was helping some young lady that was cut, I believe it was on the leg. She was bleeding, then there was other people that were complaining of

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chest pain and they had respiratory distress and we were trying to see if we could get some other units to help us.

Q. Were you parked on Broadway southbound?

A. Yes.

Q. North of Murray?

A. Yes, and --

Q. You were flagged for injured people, you never actually got to whatever staging area you were told to go to?

A. Right. We never made it there. All hell broke loose, because it came over my radio, people yelling to get out, they were bombing New York. So we never really finished providing care for these people, because they all panicked and they all stampede out. We followed out, because everybody was wanting to get out. The walls shook and then we felt it when a rumbling and some people were yelling earthquake.

Q. Was your partner with you the whole time?

A. We separated because there was so many people that wanted help. People, when we got to Manhattan, there was people already on their way out and people had fallen, people had shortness of breath, so he went one way and I went another. When the tower did fall, I

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didn't know where he was. He didn't know where I was. I personally got caught up in that big cloud of debris and the only thing I could think of was getting to the ambulance, which was parked. We had parked it, we left it right there. I know that we got caught up with a couple of the police officers and couple of civilians and all I can think of was just putting them in there and just easing the ambulance out and that's how we got out.

Q. You drove of it out?

A. We drove out of it yes, and we were advised to --

Q. You found your partner, your partner came back out?

A. Yes, he came back out. We also helped out Captain Olszewski, she, she came out of that rubble. We were all covered in that dust, but she was, I guess she was -- we were all choking, but she was really bad and I got her into the ambulance. I was trying to get as many people out and she had I guess stepped out, because I didn't know where she had went.

Q. What was your unit number that day?

A. I was 50 Adam.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

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A. David Cira.

Q. David?

A. C-I-R-A.

Q. Were you told a specific staging area to go to over the radio?

A. Yes, they -- but they had changed it. I believe it was Vesey and West. I know it was Vesey Street, Vesey and I think the West Side Highway, as far as I can remember, but we never made it there.

Q. Where did you say you were?

A. We were at Broadway and Murray.

Q. You were a few blocks away?

A. Right.

Q. What time do you think you got there, approximately?

A. It was before the second plane hit I guess.

Q. I guess 9:15. Anywhere around --

A. We got there before the second plane hit, so we got there after the first plane. Everybody was speculating that it was a possibility that it was a news helicopter that had lost control and slammed into the tower.

Q. Where did you get that information from?

A. It came through the KDT. It was something



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about an aircraft that I believe that I read, that it was a possibility that lost control.

Q. You were on the scene for how long would you say before the second plane hit approximately?

A. It seems like it happened so fast, but we were there when the second plane hit and we were there when the first tower collapsed. So I don't know, I guess you could say, what, 40 minutes.

Q. You said at some point you had some civilians on board when you left that Broadway and Murray location?

A. Yes, we never left, we, my partner and I, we separated. He went and helped out some people. I was helping out some people and the second plane hit and of course over my radio there was just a lot of people were yelling and they were talking about terrorists and they were talking about bombing, so everybody heard it and everybody panicked. It seemed like we were right there because the whole building shook and then the ambulance was right parked at the street.

Q. Did you see any other apparatus go by, fire engines or EMS units?

A. Yes, yes, I believe there was a Booth, a New York Hospital Queens unit. There was like two other

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units, but we all went separate ways because there were so many people that needed help. Then I guess, I don't know which tower fell down, but that caught us. All of a sudden, bright sunny day became pitch dark and we were all choking and we couldn't see and all I remember was get to the ambulance. I think I took about 6 police officers that they also were caught up in there and I just told them get in the ambulance. I think I took like 2 or 3 civilians. I had no idea.

I was afraid also because some of the people said look, there is a guy from EMS that is laying on the floor. They had told me. I said I didn't know if it was my partner or not. But you couldn't see anything. So I didn't know where that might be. We couldn't see anything. What I did was I did a U turn and edged my way out of that location, then my partner showed up like a block away. I stepped to the back and he took us out of there. They told us whatever patient we get, take them out of Manhattan, so we just notified, we asked for a stand by at New York Hospital Queens. I believe it was like 6 officers, about 3 civilians that we brought in. That was it. I came back.

Q. Did you see any other EMS personnel besides

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those going by, anyone in the street, any officers, EMS officers?

A. Like I said we were helping out Captain Olszewski. She wasn't doing too good, but then she stepped out. We washed her face.

Q. Do you know where she went?

A. No, I, you know, I told her to stay, she wasn't doing too good, but came back to Queens and we started seeing -- she had walked out, so I don't know where she had gone. But that, I do remember that. I saw a lot of other people, EMS people, but I don't recognize them. They could have been Manhattan units. Everybody was doing something.

Q. You met your partner one block away, where would that be?

A. You know, we were on Murray and Broadway. I made a U turn, so I'm not sure if it was on Broadway that we were on or on Murray, but -- I don't know, I really couldn't tell you a precise, but thank god when I saw him I was relieved, because everybody told me that he was hurt.

Q. He had patients with him at that time?

A. No, no. Because I had the ambulance. He had came out and whoever we were helping, everybody was

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just going crazy. Then after that it was trying to help your own selves.

Q. And you transported to a hospital?

A. New York Hospital, Queens, the old Booth Memorial.

Q. You weren't there when the second building collapsed?

A. I don't think so. I don't know which one had collapsed, but we were there when.

Q. The first one came down?

A. Yes, one of them came down. I took police officers from the -- the Bronx, the 49 precinct.

Q. Did you get their names, were you ever able to get their names?

A. Oh, yes, we did ACR's on them. Yes, we did ACR's. I'm not sure. I think it was like 6 officers and about 3 civilians. We tried our best. I know that one of them suffered, one of the civilians, an older lady, she suffered an MI, and I think one of the officers had an asthma attack. We all, they were all, I was trying to give everybody time on the oxygen, because there was two on board and the two on the portable bags that we had and I had like 6 cops and 3 civilians, something like that, so we were trying to

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help each other, as well as myself. We took them to the hospital and that's all I know. They told me to come back here.

Q. You came back to the Battalion?

A. Yes.

Q. You never responded back?

A. No, no. I never went back there. Besides, the ambulance wasn't fit to go back. It was just filled with all that dust and a lot of the people had either vomited or spit it all over.

Q. When the first building collapsed, you and your partner were separated, you were by yourself tending to patients?

A. Well, when we got there we never made it to the staging, because a lot of the police officers just flagged us down and I recall that they flagged us down at Broadway and Murray. We were in front of the, I believe it was CitiBank. The employees of the banks said look, we got a lot of people that are hurt. There was a young lady that had a laceration, I believe. I don't know if it was to the foot or leg. That's when a short time later, that's when the second plane hit, so I never got a chance to finish trying to control bleeding.

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There was also people that were complaining of chest pains and stuff like that. So I never got a chance to see all these people because once the second plane hit, it came over the radio that terrorists and bombing, so of course, everybody all panicked, got out and just started running and the lady with the cut, I don't know where she went. We all ended up outside. That's when one of the towers fell.

Q. Where were you at that point when the first tower fell?

A. At that location, Broadway and Murray.

Q. In the street or in the CitiBank?

A. We had came out because we didn't know what was going on. First they said they were bombing New York. A lot of people were talking about earthquakes and everybody just scattered. Somebody had told me that my partner was hurt and then all you could see is that big cloud. We can hear the rumbling, you could hear. We just saw that cloud, we turned around and it all caught us. I was with the -- I can't remember her name, but it was a police officer, female police officer.

She grabbed on to me. She got scared. I was scared, because we heard all that rumbling and we could

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only imagine that parts of the tower was falling down. My concern was if we stay there we were going to get hit. But like I said, day turned to night and all I could think of was get to the ambulance, because I knew we had oxygen there and at least we can at least inch our way out. But when they heard the radio, a lot of people just made like a Cuban chain. She clinged on to me and then they clinged on to her and I said look, let's get in the ambulance, get some oxygen, we had water. We were able to wash our faces out.

So like I said, there was about I think 6 officers. They brought I think about 3 civilians came in. As much as I could get in and I turned around and we inched our way out and then thank god my partner showed up and we notified them that we were taking them to the old Booth.

Q. You were working off a radio, do you remember what channel you were on?

A. Citywide.

Q. Did you always stay on that channel, were you initially on that channel or did you ever change to it and did you change any other frequency after that?

A. No, afterwards they told us to stay on Citywide. We were --

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Q. You were initially on Queens?

A. We were on Queens, right. We were on Queens, then they told us to switch to Citywide. A lot of people were calling for help. I was calling for help. We just notified them that we were going to go to the Queens Hospital.

Q. Okay. Was there any persons from people that you can identify being on the scene, any other uniformed workers that you know by name, any paramedics or EMTs that you know that you saw while you were operating on the scene until you left the scene that you saw present there?

A. You know, I saw a few people, but I don't know their names. The only one that I can recall was Captain Olszewski. I saw Hunter units that were also there. Metro Care units.

Q. EMS officers, other than the Captain, that's the only one you saw?

A. I saw other officers, but like I said I don't know them by name.

Q. Were they running away from the building, were they running into another building?

A. When we first got there, there were two units pulled up. We got there and like I said a lot of



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people stopped us, so we never made it to the staging or to the triage. Then they pulled up, I believe it was New York Hospital Queens paramedic ambulance. They also tended to other people saying that they was having chest pains. I think Saint Vincent's Catholic Medical Center paramedic ambulance was also there.

Q. But you can't identify who the individuals were?

A. I can remember their faces, because they work here in Queens, but I don't know their names offhand.

Q. You saw them again afterwards that same day or --

A. No, I haven't seen them recently that I recall. If they show me pictures or something, I bet I can recall them.

Q. Okay. Any fire officers did you see that you know, that you would know who they are?

A. By me, no.

MR. FEILER: At this time I would like to ask the other interviewers to state their name, rank and command.

MS. ROM: Lieutenant Pat Rom, from the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

MS. MAGGI: EMT Diana Maggi from

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Investigations and Trials.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add before we conclude the interview that you think is important?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: At this time we will conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time in assisting us with this. The time now is 7:35 a.m. This will conclude the interview.

File No. 9110013

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ANTHONY BARTOLOMEY

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

## A. BARTOLOMEY

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 9th, 2001. The time is 0916 hours. This is Christine Bastedenbeck of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm with Christopher Eccleston. We're conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title, and your assigned command of the Fire Department regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. My name is Anthony Bartolomey, an EMT assigned to EMS Battalion 4.

Q. What unit were you working on September 11?

A. 02 Bravo Tour I.

Q. Who were you working with on that day?

A. Pasquale Felitti.

Q. On that morning, were you assigned to the World Trade Center?

A. Yes.

Q. Approximately what time?

A. At approximately 8:55 a.m.

Q. At approximately what time did you arrive?

A. At about 8:58.

Q. On your way there, were you able to see anything that was happening?

A. Debris floating in the air from the towers,

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people running away from the towers and vehicles left abandoned in the street. We were approaching from Broadway coming westbound on Cortlandt Street. There were two taxicabs and a soda truck left abandoned by their drivers. My partner actually got out of the vehicle and pulled the vehicles over to the side so we could get the ambulance through. We made a right turn onto Church Street, parked on Church and Fulton in front of the Millenium Hotel on the southeast corner.

Q. When you arrived there, did any civilians report anything to you?

A. Yes. Numerous civilians were telling me that a plane had hit the building. There were discrepancies as to the type of plane. Some were saying it was a Cessna or Leer jet type, a small jet plane. Some said it was a large passenger plane. One person actually said that it was like a military style plane that actually shot missiles into the building.

Q. Who did you report to when you first got there?

A. When we got there, there were no supervisors on the scene. We reported to a paramedic unit from New York Downtown, I believe it was 1 Victor. They're paramedics based out of Beekman Downtown Hospital.

A. BARTOLOMEY

They had had their vehicle on the corner of Vesey and Church, on the southwest corner, in front of 5 World Trade by Borders Bookstore. They already had three patients in their vehicle. There were more patients approaching as we had gotten there. So we grabbed our equipment out of our vehicle and walked up a block to them. It was them and a crew from 1 Adam was there also treating some patients. Nobody had established staging at that time yet, or, if they had, it hadn't come up over the radio. So pretty much we stayed where we were and started to treat patients there.

Q. That was where; at the corner of --

A. The corner of Vesey and Church Street.

Q. Okay. Then just tell me the events that you remember happening.

A. Then as we were starting to treat some more patients, we heard rumbling. We thought maybe it was debris falling from the tower. You look up and you see the flame of the plane hitting the second building. When you see the footage on TV, you see it fly in one side and the fireball shot out through the other side. We actually saw the fireball shot out from the north side of that building.

Everybody got behind the vehicle to brace

## A. BARTOLOMEY

themselves against any debris that was coming down. Debris came down. There was glass and metal hitting the ground around us. That's when we decided to get out of that area because we didn't know what else was going to come down on us. So we got the people that were able to walk from there, we got them to walk, got ourselves out of there.

I'm not sure where my partner went after that. I went towards the subway station on Church Street in front of that cemetery. It's by the Trinity Church annex. Because people were standing there just like deer in the headlights kind of thing, just staring.

Q. Did you walk at that point?

A. I ran, actually.

Q. You ran. Okay.

A. It was only across the street because we were on the west side of the street. The subway station is on the east side. There's a double entrance. Two stairways converge into one. They go down into the mezzanine level. People were just standing there. I was telling them get down, get underground, because they're sitting there while stuff is still falling on them. So I get them down there.

## A. BARTOLOMEY

That's where I started finding patients and apparently somebody was there with -- I guess he must have been treated and the crew that was there ran and he got left behind because he had a cervical collar and he had a triage tag around his neck. So I had a couple of civilians help me carry him down the stairs to the bottom, to the mezzanine level, where the token clerk is, put him there, and then they had another patient who was a female. She had fallen and hit her head. She had a lump about the size of a golf ball on her forehead. She was going in and out of consciousness. We put her down next to the other guy. Then there was an elderly female who felt weak in the legs and was unable to walk. So now I had three patients there in front of the token booth.

So I go back upstairs, come up on the radio, let them know, you know, I'm half crew. I don't know where my partner is. I've got three patients not able to walk. I need somebody to get them out of there because at that point I had no equipment on me either. Slowly but surely the police started coming down with some equipment to help carry the patients out. We got the third one out of there. I forget exactly what time. It was right before the towers fell, which that



## A. BARTOLOMEY

was about between 9:55 and 10:00, approximately. Because we had gotten back upstairs with the last patient and there was nobody around. There were police officers there saying the tower was in danger of collapse and so they were evacuating the immediate area.

So we went up one block to Barclay Street. We were still on Church walking northbound. We got to St. Peter's Church, and I'm not sure who these people were, I'm not sure if they were federal or plainclothes police officers also, told us start setting up a triage over in front of St. Peter's Church because at this point nobody really was sure where everybody was going. So anybody who could walk was walking, getting out of the immediate area.

So we still had this one guy on a long board with a collar on him, and they brought one other person over who was in a stair chair. I forget exactly what his injuries were. I believe he had hurt his ankle or something like that. That's when we heard the rumbling of the tower starting to collapse and we started to get people inside the church because you saw the cloud of the smoke and the soot that was kicked up when the tower fell. At the rate of speed it was coming up the

A. BARTOLOMEY

street, we weren't going to be able to outrun it, so we decided the best bet would be to get back in inside. We got who we could inside. I got caught outside of the church when the dust cloud overcame me and then I felt my way back in. There were some other officers and people inside the church, and we waited there until the dust subsided a little bit so we could get out.

At that point I lost track of time. I couldn't tell you exactly what time everything happened after that. We get outside I was complaining my throat was burning from breathing in -- I don't think how long I was outside breathing in all the soot and everything. There was a unit from Booth Memorial Hospital, another ambulance unit. They already had patients in their vehicle. They took me and told me to go with them, and then they brought me up to Roosevelt Hospital.

Q. And you became a patient there?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. I'm not sure because, like I said, I lost track of time. So I'm not sure if I was still in the church when the second tower came down because we were

A. BARTOLOMEY

in there for quite a while before you could see outside enough to step out because the soot and the dust, the black in the sky to the point where it looked like it was nighttime outside.

Q. You said you ended up going to the hospital with a Booth Memorial unit?

A. Yes.

Q. In the time that you were down at the scene of the Trade Center, did you run into any EMTs or paramedics that you knew?

A. I ran into one, but I didn't know him. He said he was from Brooklyn.

Q. Was he on duty or off duty, in a uniform?

A. He had the uniform shirt, but he was wearing jeans, so I'm assuming he was off duty at the time.

Q. But you didn't know his name?

A. I didn't know who he was. He just said he worked out of Brooklyn.

Q. The only place you went prior to the collapse was into the subway station?

A. Yes.

Q. And that was --

A. The E train. It's the World Trade Center station of the E train.

A. BARTOLOMEY

Q. From which street did you enter into that?

A. From Church Street in between I believe it's Cortlandt -- no. Fulton and Vesey. Right here in front of St. Paul's cemetery.

Q. You never went into the Trade Center buildings themselves?

A. No. The closest I got was in the front, right here, where Borders Bookstore was, which is right over here. That was as close as I got. I never actually went inside the building, no.

Q. So for the first collapse you had gone to St. Peter's Church?

A. Yes.

Q. As the building came down and the cloud of smoke approached you, you felt your way into the church?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you came outside and you're not even aware of when the second tower came down?

A. No.

Q. Do you know approximately what time you became a patient?

A. That would probably be around between 10:30 and 11:00. I have the paperwork from the hospital. I

A. BARTOLOMEY

don't have it with me. But it would tell you what time I got to the hospital and the time I was released.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you'd like to include in the interview, anything you want to say?

A. No, that's about it.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Then this concludes the interview with EMT Anthony Bartolomey. The time now is 9:28 on October 9, 2001.

File No. 9110014

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMTD CHRISTOPHER KAGENAAR

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

C. KAGENAAR

MR. RADENBERG: Today is September 9th, 2001. The time is 1533 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and title.

A. EMTD Christopher John Kagenaar.

Q. Your assigned command?

A. My assigned command is Battalion 31.

Q. Of the Fire Department, City of New York?

A. That is correct.

Q. We are at EMS Battalion 31. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

All yours. This is not so much by the questions but what you recall.

A. Pretty much coming out of the station, because the station is always overlooking the World Trade Center, that as we got the signal over the KDT and we were pulling out of the station, I thought it was like a little fire, and then we come out and there's like people from Cumberland Hospital looking up at it and there was like black, thick smoke coming out of the World Trade Center Tower 1 and we're like, wow, this is real, because you really didn't know how bad it was until we got over the Brooklyn Bridge, when we got

C. KAGENAAR

near the Brooklyn Bridge. It looked like a war zone. Cops, firemen, vehicles, all the lights heading over the bridge. It was crazy. It was like it was a movie.

Then as soon as we got over there, as soon as we got off of the Brooklyn Bridge, the people were running like it was a Godzilla movie, and we had to stop there for a while. People were overcome, were shaken, were scared, minor cuts and bruises, and we had to stop and do that, and there was a Lieutenant that showed up and said, look, you guys have to get over to the scene. You guys can't stay here. So finally when PD got control of the area, we moved over to I think it was Church. I think it was Church area.

What happened was then the second plane hit the tower, and it was a loud noise, I mean, it hit, and at first I was like this can't be happening. It's like lightning doesn't strike twice. Then the second plane hit the tower, so now we know, oh, my God, what's really going on here now?

So it was just a lot of confusion, everybody started running again, and then we set up and we started treating people, I mean, minor cuts and scrapes, and some people had serious damage.



C. KAGENAAR

MR. TAMBASCO: Do you recall where you were when this was happening? I don't know if the map would help you at all.

Q. When you first came off the bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge, do you remember where you were?

A. We were over here on Church. Because he was Haz-Tac, so I had to set up like 200 feet away and stuff.

Q. So on Church Street somewhere?

A. Right.

Q. Somewhere on Church. You were down by the towers?

A. Yes, I was down by the towers.

Q. Okay.

A. Then, when the second tower came down, everybody started running, big cloud of smoke. I left the truck open because I couldn't find Harris and I dove down a train station. Then I came back up on Reade and I got back in there and came back to the scene and I see my ambulance. It was still there, but it was like full of dust and soot. Because in case Harris could have made it to the truck, he could have dove in the truck to save himself. There was just total devastation. I've never seen anything like it

## C. KAGENAAR

before in my life. So Russell had --

Q. Your partner, Russell?

A. Right. Russell Harris.

Q. He hadn't left you while you were there; you were still with the ambulance?

A. Right. I had to be with the ambulance while he went in to go Haz-Tac, to suit up.

Q. Oh, okay. All right. So he was suiting up with the Haz-Tac stuff?

A. Right.

Q. Then you lost sight of him?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where the train station was that you went in?

A. No. I didn't even look. I just dove down the train station. Then I walked for like a little bit and I came back out when all the dust and soot cleared and everything.

Q. Where did you go from there?

A. I went right back to the truck.

Q. Right back to the truck?

A. Right back to the truck because I thought maybe he could have made it to the truck.

Q. Then you stayed there?

C. KAGENAAR

A. I stayed there. I met up with somebody whose name is Morrison. He was off duty and he showed up.

Q. An EMS guy?

A. Yes, an EMS guy. He showed up with shorts and Timberland boots and he just wanted to help out. So I was like, that's it, you're with me, we're going to stick together, and we went over to the staging. But we also had to run when the first tower came down. It was like the first time you thought it was impossible and then the second time it happened, too.

Q. So Russell was still with you when the first one came down or he was gone? In other words, you got there, set up, and he went and set up?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. I was mostly doing like treating patients and then a Citywide ambulance would come up and something like that, you know, hey, take this patient.

Q. So when the first tower came down, that's when you went down into the subway, or the second one?

A. The first tower.

Q. The first one. Then you stayed there?

A. Yes. Then the second tower, when the second tower was coming down, we grabbed as much people and

C. KAGENAAR

personnel as we could, threw them in the back of the ambulance, and we went two blocks and we went down this way so we had the building protecting us as the -- it was nasty because there was such a thick, brown smoke, it was like everything was gone, and it was like that for a while.

Q. So you were heading uptown?

A. Yes.

Q. I got you.

A. Trying to keep the vehicle, one, intact, and also to try to get -- because I had loaded the back of the ambulance with people just to get them out of the area, cops, firemen, ATF agents, whatever.

Q. Anybody who got in.

A. Yes. Pretty much get in, get in, let's go. Morrison drove and we turned up this way and we just stood there and we waited until that big dust thing blew on everything. It was like a blizzard.

Q. But you had the other building --

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what street you wound up on?

A. No. I wasn't even looking.

Q. Someplace north.

A. Then they told all the units to start heading

C. KAGENAAR

over to Chelsea Piers, and we went over there and we just stood there. Then they told us, okay, now you're going to go over to Reade and Greenwich. We went to Reade and Greenwich. We stood there. Then the 911 calls kept coming in, but it was like the calls that came in at 9:00 o'clock in the morning and we were backlogged. They started coming back in and like 7 World Trade Center --

Q. You were hearing all this over the radio?

A. Yes. So every time we tried to like -- we'd see a unit go out of staging and it would go back in, we're like hoping they won't come back. But they came back. So it was getting real depressing. Then finally they moved us over by the Staten Island Ferry and we just sat there until we got released. Pretty much we just stood there like hoping for something to do. We didn't see anything.

Q. Just one other question. When you were talking about that Lieutenant before, when you first got there, was that an EMS Lieutenant?

A. Yes, it was EMS.

Q. It was. Okay. You don't know who it was?

A. No. Pretty much I remember there was a Chief Vilani who was in charge of the Staten Island Ferry and

C. KAGENAAR

he was like keeping us going and stuff. He was like, you know, we lost a lot of people, we don't know who, but we've got to keep going. So it was kind of nice to hear him talk like that. He was very like, you know, keep us going, like got us food and they set up phones for us and everything.

Q. That was Vilani?

A. Yes, Vilani.

Q. EMT Morrison, do you know him or do you know where he works?

A. He works in the 57.

Q. Battalion 57?

A. Right.

Q. Did you see any other EMS people that you remember?

A. Well, I was glad to see everybody from my station was okay because there was a couple that we still didn't know about until the end of the night because we got spread out all over the place.

Q. When did you finally wind up catching up with Russell?

A. Actually, I have a Nextel and he finally got ahold of me when he was in the hospital. He told me I'm in Brooklyn Hospital.

C. KAGENAAR

Q. He was able to get you by phone.

A. Yes. Radios, they were saying no unauthorized transmissions, only supervisors and officers got to use the radio and everything.

Q. I guess that's about it, unless you have anything else you want to say.

A. Well...

Q. Feel free.

A. I mean, everything went well. You thought it would have been chaos with everybody running around, not knowing what to do, but pretty much it was something, it was a disaster, but there was like order. There was still a chain of command.

Q. Very good. Thanks.

A. No problem.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1542. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110015

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RUSSELL HARRIS

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis



R. HARRIS

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 9th. My name is Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We're doing an interview today regarding the events of September 11th at the Trade Center. In the room with me is Investigator...

MR. RADENBERG: Paul Radenberg.

MR. TAMBASCO: The subject of the interview is...

EMT HARRIS: Russell Harris, Battalion 31, Unit 31 Henry Tour 2.

Q. Russ, if you can, just start right from the beginning and just tell me everything that you saw, you felt, you did, to the best of your memory.

A. That particular morning, my unit that I was relieving, which was 31 Henry Tour 1, came in a little late. Ironically, they parked it at the top of the hill, which they never do. They always park down here at the garage. So by the time that we signed for our equipment and we were going out to the unit, my partner, who was Mr. Kagenaar, he happened to look over out the gate and saw that the World Trade was on fire. When he initially told me that, I thought it was a joke. I was opening up the side door and placing my equipment in because I was teching that day. I looked

R. HARRIS

over as well and saw that it was on fire.

Subsequently to that the dispatcher called me maybe 30 seconds, 45 seconds later, and stated they wanted us to respond to a job. But the funny part was the job wasn't to the World Trade Center. It was at 350 Fifth Avenue, which is the Empire State Building. So my partner was driving and he clearly stated to me he didn't know Manhattan that well. So during the course of going over the bridge, he really didn't know which direction to go to. So we got off going towards Park Row, which is right in front of City Hall.

Well, by the time we passed City Hall, there was a melee of traffic and my partner had to tie on brakes for people who were running madly coming down Park Row in front of J & R. So we actually got caught and had to make that left turn and got stuck right there. As we did that, a few unmarked RMPs also were stuck. One of them was a police officer I had known. His name is Claude. He's a detective. So as I'm sitting there talking to Claude trying to figure out where he was responding and what was going on, we happened to look back at the Trade and we saw the second plane hit, bam.

At the same time, about three city buses were

R. HARRIS

coming past. So we stopped the city buses and we cleared out all of the passengers and we asked the buses --

Q. They were going downtown?

A. They were going towards the Brooklyn Bridge. We asked the buses to sit at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge so in the event that there were any walking wounded, we could throw them on the buses and send them over the bridge. Well, as we were doing that, a Fire Lieutenant came and approached me and he asked what unit I was, and I told him, and he said all the Hazmat units are staging down at West and Vesey and he needed me to suit up.

So I explained to him that my partner wasn't Hazmat certified and I was unable to suit up. He said, don't worry. You go down there and somebody can help you suit up. I want you to go in the building. We've got a team there. We want to go in and we're doing search and rescue. So I said, well, I still can't do it. He said, look. After you do this, you don't really have a lot of patients because they're walking wounded. They're okay. I want you to just gather up, and he told me to go down to West and Vesey.

Well, at the same time, like I said, there

R. HARRIS

was a melee of people running. Smoke and debris was going everywhere. So my partner once again jumped behind the wheel, we got in, put on the lights and siren, and we were able to make it down to Church and Park. At Church and Park, the FBI told us, this is our staging, this was where we had to stop, we couldn't cross their barriers. They were setting up barriers. At that time I saw everybody coming, Housing police, DEP, Corrections, court officers.

Q. Private.

A. Court officers. I looked back at the building and I saw all this black smoke and everything. Well, as soon as I stopped, my partner and myself, we opened the door, I got out my Hazmat equipment and I was starting to put it on the hood of the thing, of the vehicle. We had a walking wounded come and he was cut severely to his left arm and his left upper thigh.

Q. Civilian?

A. Civilian. He was lacerated bad. So we put him right in the bus. My partner started wrapping him up, you know, stabilizing the bleeding, took his pressure and everything, and at that time, FBI and a police Captain came and they asked me could I move my

R. HARRIS

vehicle up another block and that we had a temporary triage down at St. Peter's Church, which is at Church and Barclay. So I said all right. The patient was stable, vital signs were normal. We packed him up. So I told my partner, put him in the chair. Since I have the Hazmat mask and my helmet, I'll go down there and drop him off at the church in the chair and I'll come back. So I took the patient down to the church. Once again, a Fire Lieutenant came up to me. He saw me dropping off the patient and he advised me --

Q. If I can interrupt you one second, who was at the triage center over there?

A. There was an FBI agent. That's the only one I saw outside. I never actually made it in the building. As I'm dropping off the patient, the FBI agent comes up to me and he says, oh, man, I just heard there's a third plane coming in. So I look at the patient, I'm at the church, and I said, well, look, there's nothing else I could do for you right now. You're here and you can hop upstairs and you can go in the church and that's where you could be safe.

As I said that and he turned around, all this black smoke started filling and I looked at the building and it started vibrating. So I was almost

R. HARRIS

next to the cemetery at that time. I was on the side of the church. I looked and all this debris just started exploding everywhere, and I turned around to run and I didn't see the patient anymore, and myself and the FBI guy just started going down that block.

Q. Were you going north?

A. Going north over towards Broadway.

Q. Right.

A. So I think that was Vesey I turned down at the time because I was on the side of the church. I went up Vesey. When I got maybe halfway the block, I got knocked to the ground. My helmet got cracked. A piece of debris had hit my helmet. So I quickly got up, put the helmet back on, and I was still running. There was black smoke everywhere. I couldn't see anything. By the time I got to Broadway, I looked around the corner. Because debris was flying, I wanted to make sure I just didn't get knock unconscious, and I looked and I just saw parts of things just flying past me. So I stopped and took a deep breath and just ran across and I made a left on Broadway. By that time I made it to City Hall.

When I got to City Hall, people were -- they were just in chaos trying to climb the gates and the

R. HARRIS

fences and get in. Somebody noticed I was in the Fire Department EMS uniform, so they brought this lady up to me and I was out of breath. They said this lady is having chest pains. I said, well, I don't have an ambulance. I have a radio, but I can't communicate because we were having communication problems. I said, but if she wants, she can gladly follow me because I'm going to go where you can get some help. So I guess they understood that at that time everything was all chaotic and there was nothing I could do, and everybody just started following me and I told them stay away from the larger buildings and really going into City Hall wasn't a great thing. So we all started moving downward going towards the Supreme Court.

So by the time I got to the Municipal Building and I turned around to look to see if debris had stopped falling, the second building started coming down. By that time everybody took off again. So I looked to see and I had noticed at that time I didn't know where my partner was and the radio was chaotic. I couldn't go over the radio. My partner and myself just happen to have Nextel radios, but we couldn't communicate because the satellite went down. So I said, well, as soon as I get over here, down past the

R. HARRIS

courts, I'll probably be able to get a signal and I'll keep trying him.

At that time I ran into a young man named Mr. Medina. He works for Long Island College Hospital, but that day he was working up at Beth Israel. When I reflected back after speaking to him, because he came up to me, he was out of breath, he had a working cell phone and I had the working part of a radio, and he had told me he lost his partner. I said you know what? While I was standing there, I noticed a Beth Israel bus and it got crushed, so maybe you should just keep coming with me. Then I noticed I was hopping and my leg was swelling up.

Q. The Beth Israel bus was where?

A. The Beth Israel bus was right back at the World Trade Center.

Q. About where you were parked?

A. Right around the corner. But they were closer in front of the building. So he decided he would stay with me. We kept trying to communicate. We called Citywide. They referred us to RCC. We called RCC and we gave them both of our shield numbers and told them we were all right and that I was trying to get into Brooklyn to get to the hospital because my leg



R. HARRIS

was just swelling up. He kept calling on his cell phone to try to update them to where we were so there wouldn't be a problem, and then he was telling them that we'd lost our partners.

By the time I got down to -- there's a park over there around Bowery, maybe a block over from the Manhattan Bridge. We sat down for a moment and debris was still coming down. It made it all the way down to that park. That's a little past Canal Street. We were able to catch our breath and get through and let them know I was fine, and he told me, if I'd be all right, he'd like to head back because he wanted to find his partner. So I told him, you go ahead, and he said, no, I can't leave you until I know you're all right.

So he walked me back towards the Manhattan Bridge and we noticed all these people going over the bridge and they were stopping the trucks and cars, and he saw private green sanitation truck and he went up to the guy and said can you take my partner in to Brooklyn so he can go to the hospital, and as he said that, some of the people overheard him and they came and they grabbed me and lifted me up and they put me in the back of the dumper in the back of the sanitation truck.

So as I'm coming over, I hear my partner come

R. HARRIS

over Citywide and he says my partner is in the building. Because he heard them advise me to get dressed and go in the building, he assumed when I went to drop off the patient they took me in the building, so I was in the building. I heard him and they told him unauthorized transmission, only Chiefs and above can be on Citywide at this time. So I went back over the radio and told him I'm not crushed in the building. I'm going over the bridge. So I'm all right and I'll talk to you later.

When I got halfway over the bridge, people started looking back because this thing starts smoking again. They thought something else was going to happen. They stopped all the traffic in the middle of the bridge. So I had decided I would get off this garbage truck and keep hopping until I got into Brooklyn. Once I got off, though, I noticed there was a firefighter coming across the bridge and he was holding his radio, and he was covered in soot and he was talking on his radio but he didn't have a battery on the radio.

So we both made it about the same time to Tillary Street and this lady was driving past and she stopped and she picked me up and she brought me to the

R. HARRIS

station here. I don't even know what happened to the firefighter. But once I got here, I made it the best way I could to the hospital because we didn't have any vehicles or anything. Actually, the battalion was closed off. They had it barricaded. So once they saw me coming in full of soot and everything, they opened the gate for me and let me in, and then I hobbled down here and I was advised I had to get to the hospital, and I did. By then I had noticed I had a lot of beeps and a lot of phone calls because people found out, I guess, that I was all right from the World Trade.

When I got to the hospital, everything was fine. They diagnosed me, told me I had actually tore a hamstring. But they had looked at it and they said, you know what? It's not that bad. In light of what was going on, I figured the same thing. So I returned back to work. I didn't stay out at all because I knew there were a lot more people that were worse off than myself.

So I came back to work, and by the time I got back there, I noticed both of my partners who were on vacation came in because they called in and they told them I was lost at the World Trade. One came from Long Island and one came from Bay Ridge and they both came

R. HARRIS

in and worked. They were sitting at the bridge in hopes that they saw me coming over the bridge, I guess.

I guess the biggest thing that I noticed was the lack of knowing what was going on, because I don't know what you could say would be worse, to actually stand there and see this? The first thing came in my mind was the movie Armageddon, and this was reality, with the black smoke 30 floors high, debris falling everywhere. Being on this side, not knowing what was going on that side, because there were people, when I was coming back over the bridge, going on motorcycles walking, people coming back this way trying to go to Manhattan, and I'm thinking to myself they must be crazy. But then there were people here that were more stressed because they couldn't get on the other side of the bridge.

So I didn't feel bad knowing that I had made it. A lot of people had guilt that I spoke to afterwards or they were just so devastated. Because I have never seen anything like that in 21 years of emergency work. But like I said, the biggest thing was to know that certain people had made it out, because everybody didn't have to make it, and that we were able

R. HARRIS

to just stand up and go through all of this and still come back the next day. So I guess the biggest thing I learned was, not the salaries, not the titles, because there were no bosses anymore at the scene. We were very chaotic and I guess from M training and just love of humanitarianism, which we all have, we all were able to bring together and make it through.

Q. Anything else you want to say, Russ?

A. No.

Q. I guess you said it all.

A. Other than I'm just happy I'm here and the first thing I did was let the kids know I was all right. I was worried about debriefing everybody here, EMS and the Fire Department and the police, and we subsequently had a debriefing set up a few weeks later up at Cumberland Clinic.

Q. Thanks, Russ.

A. Thank you.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview will conclude at 1443 hours. If it wasn't mentioned, it was begun at 1423 hours.

File No. 9110024

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SORAYA O'DONNELL

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

SORAYA O'DONNELL

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time now is 808 hours and this is Lieutenant Monte Feller of the New York City Fire Department Investigations and Trials. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assignment.

A. EMT Soraya O'Donnell.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. We are conducting the interview of Battalion 52 in Flushing regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Also for the record, can you please state your name.

MR. QUEVEDO: Investigator Quevedo of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. Basically what we need you to do is just give us a scenario of the events on the morning of September 11, as it relates to the World Trade Center incident.

A. I come in at 9:00 o'clock. I was on my way in. I was driving up to the battalion. My partner ran to my car and told me that the World Trade Center was hit by a plane and I parked the car

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and then he told me that tour 1, who was sitting at the garage, got the job. So I ran upstairs. I got my equipment and we usually take their late job. We jumped on and we went 63. We never logged off tour one, because they were already 63. So you can't log off. So we went as tour 1. We called -- we tried to call RCC Queens to let them know where we were from, but it was too busy.

So we called to let the lieutenant know that we were tour 2 going to the World Trade Center.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Richard Erdy.

Q. Did you know who the EMT's were that you were --

A. That we took the job for? It was Rebecca Bird and Brian Harin. He is a new guy.

Q. Do you know if they responded to the call?

A. No, they didn't. They went home.

Q. You said that you called. How did you call?

A. We called on the cell phone. We called RCC and we called the Queens dispatcher while we were 63. The dispatcher told us to respond to -- to go to citywide. She told us to respond to the



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59th Street bridge and once we were there she would tell us where to go. So I took the LIE. There was a lot of traffic. I took the Grand Central to the last exit, got off at 21st Street, took that to the 59th Street bridge. I told the dispatcher I was there. From there I could see already the smoke and traffic was beginning to build up. She told me to respond to Vesey and West.

So I took the FDR drive. I was still in a little bit of traffic. You know, it was sporadic. Like sometimes there would be traffic and then the cops would have something closed and then it would move. It was just like a caravan of ambulances in front of me and in back of me there was a whole bunch of ambulances.

I got off, I just followed them all the way there. I don't really know where I was, but then again we came to a stop. We were like a few blocks away from the World Trade Center. We came to a stop and it was slowing down, the caravan. Then I heard on the radio someone say there is a fireman down, there is a fireman down on this and this street and I'm looking around to see where I am and I see a fireman turn the corner and he's waving his hands.

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So I look behind me. There is buses behind me, there is buses in front of me that could easily get to him, but they're not moving so I started like maneuvering myself and made kind of like a, what do you call it? A K-turn. And I went over there. We took out the stretcher and they had a fireman, they was doing CPR.

Q. Do you know where you were at that time, the street location?

A. I think I was on West Street, a few blocks -- I was heading north, you know, as you come off the FDR drive, the tunnel. So I think I was heading north and I was a couple of blocks south of the --

Q. Both buildings were still standing at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Had both buildings been hit at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see the airplanes hit the buildings?

A. No, no. When I left the battalion, when I was 63, we heard someone say over the radio, we heard a bomb went off in the other building. We're

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not sure if it's a bomb and they were trying to confirm it's another building -- it's another airplane.

Q. Do you know approximately what time you arrived at that location where you met up with the firefighter?

A. No. But in my unit history I went 82 to the hospital at 1001, I believe, and that was because the KDT was backing up also. Nothing was going through. So I remember I kept hitting the button, hitting the button on the way to the hospital. Anyway, so we went and they were doing CPR on the fireman. We put the long board and everything on the stretcher. We went over there and we continued to do CPR. We put him on the bus. Dr. Kelly was there. She came over and a paramedic came over. I don't know who he was.

Q. EMS? The Fire Department?

A. The paramedic? I don't know.

Q. Do you know who he is?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. They tried to intubate him. They couldn't get a tube in. So they left because they saw really

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he wasn't gonna be viable, and we transported him to the hospital with two of the firemen from his company.

Q. Which hospital did you go to?

A. We went to Bellevue. I asked P.D. for an escort and a highway and a motorcycle cop gave me an escort to the hospital.

Q. The firefighter that you did CPR on, do you know his name?

A. Yes.

Q. What was his name?

A. Brian Suhr. Was it Brian? Engine Company 216 from Brooklyn.

Q. The firefighters that accompanied you, were they from the same --

A. I don't remember their names. The other one I don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. Anyway, we went to Bellevue. Once I got to Bellevue we took him out and they told me you gotta move the bus. You can't leave it there. And I had a lot of BBP in the back. So I said, where do I go? So I said, let me go to the battalion, to Bellevue station to clean up.

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I went over there, I grabbed a few of the things that belonged to the firemen. I brought it to the hospital, to the Emergency Room. I told one of the maintenance guys at Bellevue what I needed and I gave my partner the ACR.

I went back, I started cleaning up. The maintenance guy was helping me clean up. He cleaned up the ambulance and I restocked. I went back to meet up with my partner and he couldn't get any information from the firemen, because they were refusing to give us any name or anything, because they didn't want the media to get a hold of anything. Which we understood. So we said fine.

We finished the paperwork, we went back into the ambulance. While we were finishing up, restocking, a -- I think it was an EMT nun asked if she could come back with us. She wanted to volunteer. We said okay. Another doctor from the ER wanted to come also. He was a paramedic and a PA student.

Q. The EMT? She worked for the Fire Department?

A. No. She worked for Bellevue.

Q. As an EMT?

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A. No. It was a nun. She was a nun.

Q. Oh, a nun. I'm sorry. I thought you said EMT.

A. A nun. So they came in the back with us. We went back to the World Trade Center. We told the dispatcher we were out of Bellevue, where does she want us. I forget what she told us. I think it was Battery Park she wanted us to go to, triage.

When we were heading there my partner said, "Someone told me that one of the towers collapsed." I'm like "Yeah, yeah." We were like it's a joke. There were probably people exaggerating. So what happened was we were heading back and we see just a cloud of smoke. We don't see the towers anymore.

Q. How did you head back there?

A. We took the same way, the FDR drive.

Q. Southbound?

A. Yes. And we didn't see the towers. So that's when we realized that the towers had collapsed.

Q. Both of them?

A. Both of them. It was just a lot of smoke. And we kept hearing transmissions on the radio. You know, stuff that was going on. People saying they

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were trapped. We headed back. When we got back there it was a whole totally different scene. We didn't see people around like we did before. We couldn't find any ambulances. We were just driving around. Of course we couldn't believe what was going on. We drove around for a little while. We saw an EMT, one of our guys, coming out of this cloud of smoke. He was holding his EMT bag and helmet. We asked him, "Where is your partner?" He goes, "I left him. I'm looking for my father. He was in the World Trade Center."

Q. Do you know his name?

A. And he had been crying. No, we didn't get anything. So we said, "well, why don't you get in the back with us?" We had a nun in the back. We figured she could talk to him.

Q. Right.

A. He got in the back. We went around -- I don't know. I think it was Battery Park, by the water. They were ferrying everyone away. We pulled over over there, because we saw a lot of buses and we said, let's go see if that's where we are supposed to be, what's going on.

We went over there and I think there was only

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one more unit there.

Q. Do you know which unit that was?

A. No.

Q. Fire Department?

A. It was volunteer. It was a volunteer.

They said that nothing was going on. They were just ferrying people. So when we went back to the ambulance the kid was gone. The EMT left. So we didn't know where he went, we didn't get a name, nothing.

Q. When you say you were at Battery Park, that was south of the Battery Tunnel where the fort is or where Marine Company 1 is?

A. Do you have a map?

Q. Yes, I do. If you can just mark the first time you arrived where you were and the second time.

A. I think -- I don't know. I can't. This looks confusing to me. Which is the north tower?

Q. This would be north. Here is the West Side Highway, here is West Street and here are the towers.

A. I think it was somewhere around here.

Q. At Battery Park City?

A. Yes.



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Q. By the buildings?

A. No, it wasn't here. I don't know. I'm not gonna say. Then we drove around a little more and we found a fireman who was hurt. His eyes were bloodshot. We irrigated him. He wanted to go back but he couldn't see, so we took him back to Bellevue.

Q. Do you know his name?

A. No, I don't know it, but I got it. He gave us his name. We got an ACR.

Q. Do you know what company he was it from?

A. No, no. We took him to Bellevue, we came back.

Q. You were able to get through to the dispatcher?

A. I couldn't get any signals, no and the radio was so busy I couldn't tell her anything. So I just came and went.

Q. What frequency were you on at that time?

A. Manhattan south.

Q. You were told to switch over to south?

A. We were told to switch over. Only certain people were allowed to stay on citywide. Then we came back. The same thing. We couldn't find

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anyone. We told the dispatcher we just came out of Bellevue. She told us to go to, I don't know, I think it was Chelsea Piers. But we were already here. So as we didn't know, I didn't know how to get to Chelsea Piers so I kept asking all the cops and they didn't know.

Then I ran into an off-duty EMT or paramedic and he told me, "They're setting up a triage center at the Staten Island Ferry." So I said, "Okay." No, no. Before I even ran into him there was an old man leaning against a fence having difficulty breathing. We pulled over, we put him on the stretcher and his wife and we gave them oxygen. That's when I ran into the guy. So we headed over there to bring the old couple over there.

Q. The person that directed you to the Staten Island Ferry, do you know who that was?

A. A paramedic.

Q. Do you know from what agency?

A. No, no. I know he worked for the Fire Department.

Q. The Fire Department?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he come with you to the Staten Island

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Ferry?

A. No, but I saw him later. Later on I saw him there. This is the name of the other fireman. We gave it to the hospital.

Q. Can you just read it?

A. Tony Sansobino.

Q. And he came with the firefighter who was in arrest?

A. Yes -- To the hospital.

Q. Did you bring him back to the scene or they stayed at the scene?

A. They stayed at the hospital.

Q. They stayed at the hospital?

A. Yes.

Q. About what time was that, do you think?

A. Around 11:30. We went back. So then I found the Staten Island Ferry and there was a Lieutenant there. My partner knows his name. I forgot. Anyway, he told us, park the vehicle here, grab your O2 and all your water and bring it upstairs. Upstairs they were setting the up the triage. We helped out with the triage. We were just basically waiting, waiting for patients to come. No one was coming. We were getting antsy and

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we said, "Do we go outside and pick up patients?" They said, "No. You gotta stay here." So we just waited. We tried to call our families while we were over there.

I don't know about what time Chief Brown, Bobby Brown, came in and he had been underneath the rubble. He came in. He was all dirty. He used to be our Captain here. So I'm looking at him and I said, "oh, my God. That's Bobby Brown. Oh, my God." So I went over to him and his eyes, we irrigated his eyes. We gave him O-2, we took his vitals and he needed to go to the hospital. So someone asked him what hospital. He said Peninsula General, that's where his wife works. So my partner and I took him to the hospital.

Q. Who was the supervisor at that triage? You don't know? Male? Female?

A. I don't even know. There were a couple of supervisors there.

Q. When you left and when you were turning back to the scene after somebody told that you the building had collapsed, both buildings had collapsed at that time?

A. Both buildings had collapsed.

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Q. But you didn't see them collapse?

A. No, no. I just saw a lot of smoke.

Q. Do you know what time that was about?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A. No.

Q. You never had an opportunity to go in?

A. No.

Q. Was there anybody else that you saw that you recognized that you could name? The EMS people? The Fire Department people?

A. I saw -- his name will come. He works for St. John -- he works for the privates -- St. John's, and he was working for St. Vinny's. What's his name? I saw him when I was driving around and we didn't know where to go. We looked at the ambulances and I saw that ambulance. So we pulled up next to each other and we said, "Where is everybody?" And they said, "we don't know."

Q. St. Vincent's ambulance?

A. St. Vinny's ambulance.

Q. Do you remember the unit number?

A. His name will come back. I'll take my time. Anyway.

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Q. Okay.

A. So he was in the same place where I was. He didn't know where everybody was. So we took Bobby Brown to Peninsula General in Rockaway. My partner came with me and another girl that I thought was his aide, but she wasn't. She is from Division 4. She's in sick, limited. She came with us. I think she just wanted a ride back to Queens or something.

Q. She wasn't injured?

A. She wasn't injured.

Q. Your partner, what is his name?

A. Richard Erdy.

Q. He stayed with you the entire time?

A. Yes.

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Q. You never separated?

A. We separated at Bellevue when we brought in the firefighter and I went to BBP.

Q. Other than that --

A. That was the only time.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important?

A. Yes. The fireman that was in cardiac arrest, we were trying to find out who he was,

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because we felt like, wow, If we didn't get flagged for this guy, we would have been there when they collapsed. So we kept reading articles and found the reason he went into cardiac arrest was because a body landed on him. His Engine Company pulled him -- they were doing construction on the building, they pulled him over the scaffolding. So that's where we found him. We found his name, we found where he was from. My partner spoke to another fireman who knows. We found out the company he was from. We called the company and we went over there one day, the second Thursday after the World Trade Center and we spoke to one of the guys that came to the hospital with us and he told us basically what happened. That when we left to go to the hospital we closed the doors and we left and that's when the building came down.

The other two guys that stayed from his company thought that the ambulance got crushed. So they thought that the three guys were dead basically and we were dead. Because they said as soon as we took off the building came down. When we got to the hospital and they were there for a while, that's when they found out the towers collapsed. They

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thought that the two guys they left were dead, because they left them there. They were on their way back to the building.

So they ended up meeting up and they couldn't believe each other were alive. The other two guys that we left at the scene said that they went back to get their equipment so they could go back into the building. That's when the towers collapsed. They went back underneath the scaffolding and they ran into the building.

Q. This is the first building that collapsed or the second? Do you know?

A. The first building.

Q. So you were right at the perimeter of the building?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether you were northeast, south or West?

A. I have no idea. I think I was north.

Q. Where was the firefighter exactly?

A. What do you mean?

Q. Where did you find him?

A. We found him -- this is the corner. I think I was on West Street and he turned the corner.



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I saw him, I made a maneuver, I came -- so it was on West Street. And there was a Church and there was like a scaffolding here. That's where we put him on the stretcher and everything. And that's it.

Q. Anything else?

A. That's it. And we couldn't transmit. The radios were so busy. We couldn't give signals and we couldn't give -- the KDT was down.

In our log, in our history, we couldn't get anything.

Q. You were originally on Queens east?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were asked to switch over to --

A. Citywide.

Q. And then --

A. And then Manhattan south I think it was they sent us to. North -- I think it was south.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: We will conclude the interview and I want to thank you for your time helping us with this endeavor and it is now 8:28 a.m. and this will conclude the interview.

File No. 9110025

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

RICHARD ERDEY

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

R. ERDEY

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is October 10th, 2001. The time now is 0835 hours. This is Lieutenant Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York, Investigations and Trials. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and command.

A. Richard L. Erdey, EMTD, Shield No. 1569.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department, Battalion 52, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is:

MS. QUEVEDO: Investigator Fabiola Quevedo of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. What I need you to do, sir, is just give me a scenario of how you first became involved in the events of September 11th, where you were and how you responded.

A. I was standing there at the battalion and they were calling a series of people to the job. The night tour was about to get off. They called 52 Boy. So I said, if Soraya don't come here in one minute, you guys are going out today, and this was only when the first tower was hit. I said you'll spend at least 24 hours there easy, so that's a few hundred dollars, no problem.

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So Solano pulled up. I said the World Trade Center was hit by a plane. She jumped in, got everything real quick, jumped in the vehicle and we went.

Q. Did you partner with Solano?

A. No, no.

Q. And the two people that you relieved, do you know their names?

A. Rebecca Bird and Jim Horan.

Q. Did they respond, as far as you know?

A. No.

Q. You were driving or teching?

A. Teching.

Q. How did you get there?

A. By ambulance No. 377.

Q. What route did you take?

A. [REDACTED]

Q. About what time was this?

A. 8:59.

Q. So the first plane had just hit?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were originally assigned to the call, was this on -- which frequency was it?

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A. Queens 2.

Q. That's east?

A. Queens east.

Q. Did they give you any direction?

A. No.

Q. They just told you to go down to the World Trade Center?

A. That's right.

Q. You don't recall what route you took?

A. No, I don't.

Q. When you were entering Manhattan, did you see the skyline?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you see?

A. We saw the Twin Towers. I couldn't tell both towers were hit because the way the wind was blowing. But as we got closer, I saw both towers were hit and I said this is definitely no accident. But I didn't know another plane hit the other tower.

Q. You saw both buildings were still standing at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember, were you still in Queens or in Manhattan when you saw that?

R. ERDEY

A. No.

Q. Then what happened?

A. We continued to drive down there. There was a New York Presbyterian bus in front of us. As we were going down there, he came out a few times because it was stop-and-go traffic because the other two lanes were blocked with civilian cars. So we were discussing the best route to go to. I memorized his number, this way I'd know who he was.

Q. Which was that?

A. Right now I don't have it in my head. I tried to sweep most of the stuff away.

Q. Okay.

A. We rode down there. Then I had the idea, because I see cars were trying to jump in between us, so I got on the PA and I told people stay in your lane, this is for emergency vehicles only, because nobody else seemed to be doing that. Everybody was headed towards one focus.

Q. Were you on a highway at that point?

A. We definitely were on a highway.

Q. You were still on the Queens frequency?

A. No. I think it changed to Citywide. I don't know when they told us to change to Manhattan south,

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but we were on Citywide.

Q. How long do you think it took you to get down to the World Trade Center?

A. No concept of time.

Q. When you arrived down at the general vicinity, do you know where you stopped initially, what street you were at or proximity to the buildings?

A. I was told by Engine 216 we were at the tower.

Q. Tower 1 or Tower 2? The south tower or the north tower?

A. I believe the first tower that fell because they said that we were one minute away when the tower fell.

Q. Okay.

A. Wherever Daniel Suhr was hit by that body, that's where we were.

Q. Who was that?

A. That was the fireman from Engine 216, probably the first casualty, the first known casualty, because Dr. Kelly was in that ambulance and a medic was in the ambulance with us.

Q. Do you know who the medic was?

A. I have no idea.

R. ERDEY

Q. On-duty FDNY medic or --

A. I have no idea.

Q. How did you come into contact with that firefighter? Do you remember the events surrounding that?

A. I'm sitting there and I was amazed with this vehicle that was half there and half disintegrated and, you know, you're in amazement. I didn't see the body parts. Somehow my mind blocked that out. But my partner said she saw body parts. So we hear over the air that a fireman is in cardiac arrest. You hear it. You don't know where. I'm not a big traveler in Manhattan. So I looked around and I'm not seeing a fireman in arrest. So I ran around -- and you've got to understand now, even though it's sunny, there's black at the bottom. So I had no clue we were at the tower.

So this fireman turns around, yo, yo, and he's waving. The ambulance behind us could have pulled out and went over to him. I guess they're so intent on going straight. So I had to back up, go over, go up and over the divide. Then we got to this yellow barrier. I said go through. She went through. We went under the scaffolding. So whatever tower had



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scaffolding, unless both of them did.

This photographer is there. I'll tell you one photographer probably didn't make it because that one definitely would have made the news because he was right in the guy's face. Firemen are very quick to not let you treat, just run. So they're running ahead of us with us going, and we finally get in the ambulance and we're doing all that we can. Dr. Kelly came in, who I didn't know it was Dr. Kelly at the time, but I knew she was from BHS. She looked familiar. But I'm not going to say, hey, you look familiar, not at a time like that. A medic walked in, so I just did compressions. They were trying to get an airway. All of a sudden they looked at each other, couldn't get an airway, and she said transport.

Now, I know the way they looked at each other he wasn't going to make it. He didn't make it. He's dead. His neck was snapped. Anybody hit with a body from 70 stories up. So you're not going to tell a bunch of firemen, this guy is dead, we're not transporting him. So we transported him.

Q. Did anybody accompany you?

A. Two firemen.

Q. Do you know who they were, their names or

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what company?

A. No. Solano wrote one name down. They're both from Engine 216.

Q. Okay.

A. They kept yelling, Danny, Danny, Danny. I said suction. I think it was brains coming out of his nose I'm pretty sure. You could tell his neck was snapped because every time you hit a bump, a head don't have that type of movement.

Q. Right.

A. So the kid was staring at us. Now, I know from watching my father die and even during -- my father died right after I got this job, the day after I got the job. Images burn in my head. Sometimes they play with my head. So the way they were staring into him, I said, look. I'm saying should I tell them? Should I not tell them? How can I tell them tactfully? So I said, look, we're doing the CPR for that small glimmer of hope, but I'll tell you what they're going to do. They're going to call it at the hospital. Please stop staring at him. You're going to burn this image in your head. I want you to remember a better image. At first they didn't want to believe -- not that they argued, but you could tell.

R. ERDEY

Q. Right.

A. Then they started saying he has a daughter of two. I just said continue CPR, continue suction. The other guy took over compressions for me. I mean, even though it was a short ride, it felt like the longest ride. We got to the hospital. A priest looked at me. I said give him last rights. They gave him last rights and they called it.

Now, I told the firemen on the ride there that, if they happen to call it while they're still there, don't start staring, though it's tempting. You're going to burn that image in your head, too, and that's now how you want to remember Danny. So after he called last rights, I turned and I saw the two firemen standing there. I turned around and kind of pushed them out.

Q. What hospital did you go to?

A. I believe it's Bellevue.

Q. What did you do after that?

A. My partner had to take the truck because they didn't want any trucks there at triage. So now I was cut off from Solano. So I got the two firemen out of there. I wanted to make sure they were mentally okay because I don't know if they're going back or what's

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going on. Their brother just died. I know if my partner just died, I'd be mentally all whatever.

Q. Right?

A. So I made sure they got out of there and I said, doc, make sure that they don't -- because the dude was messed up. He got hit with a body. So I went back out, I walked around, reporters are shooting with their cameras, and I said to this Metro Care ambulance, you seen my partner, a little Hispanic girl? Oh, she left. I thought, oh, no. I thought they chased her out of the whole place. So I saw another FDNY ambulance, they brought people out, and I says, I think my partner left. I'm going with you guys because I want to go back in, there's more help to do. Just as I was waiting for them, my partner grabbed me. She was around the other side cleaning because the thing was full of blood now. We're not going to pick up more patients when we're full of blood and the suction is full and all.

Q. Now, the EMTs that you ran into at that point, do you know who they were? Fire Department EMS?

A. They were Fire Department EMS.

Q. You went back to the scene after that?

A. We went back. As we're driving up into the

R. ERDEY

gray, I saw the black. Well, as we were driving back, I'm looking -- oh, let me bring it back. As we were there, whatever battalion is at Bellevue said you're taking a volunteer with you. I said I have no problem taking a volunteer. I just want you to know this could be their last ride. We're not going to go pussyfooting around. We're going back in.

Because I already made a joke to my partner because I have military training, I was a peace officer for York College, and even though it was a rent-a-cop type of outfit, they had very highly -- police and other people, people at the Olympics where they had the bombing. They told us there's always secondary devices. When we were coming to this area, I said to my partner, we'll never feel it. The underground will blow up from us and we'll be dead. Because nobody's counting on a secondary device, and whatever bonehead had us lined up around the World Trade Center, after hindsight, 20/20, that ain't too bright either because there's usually a secondary device. The Olympics showed that in Atlanta. Most bombings show that. There's always something for the people and then, when everybody comes rushing in, there's a little something extra. But we didn't expect that the building was

R. ERDEY

going to be the something extra. So I was realistic.

So it happened to be the volunteer happened to be a nun, who was older, and I said to her, look. You understand, ma'am, we might not come back from this. Oh, I understand. I said, no, I'm serious. We could die. I said, and you're a volunteer. At least my wife gets a little cash, goes back to Brazil, makes a hundred grand because she now knows English. I said, but you've got to understand that there could be something lost.

I don't know if we picked up another volunteer on the first time going in or the second time because we went in twice. It was a white dude, he was young, he could have had children but he said no, and I told him the same thing. Any volunteers I picked up, I told them this could be their last ride. Now, from that point we cleaned up, we went back, we took our volunteers.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. Nope. Names to me weren't important. I was just -- I call it the zone. When I'm doing work, it's the zone. If I had five patients, I'm in the zone for five patients. If you want to come behind me and take a potshot, you could very well do it, and most times

R. ERDEY

you couldn't. I'm in the zone for those five patients and I do my work. So when I'm in the zone, too, all right, I'm going to pick up casualties, that's all I'm going to do. So there could be a hundred people on my bus, they could all be celebrities, that doesn't mean jack to me at that point.

Q. When you returned back to the scene, where did you go? Where were you directed to?

A. Well, you know, they were giving us direction, but it was so damn gray and dark and you had to ride over this and that and ride around this because cars stopped in the middle, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So, you know, she did her best. I'm very honest with you. I mean, I look at this now, it's very big and nice. But those little maps, especially when it's bumpy, I don't even try and, you know, I'm full of amazement, like wow. In my mind, I'm dreaming and this didn't happen.

So we rode down there and there was a big black area. I said, whatever you do, don't drive into the black area because if we get a flat tire we're useless to everyone. We could barely see where we are now. She agreed that was a smart move. So we rode as close as we can when things are gray but clear, and

R. ERDEY

then out of the black comes this EMT from the Fire Department. I wish I knew his name because he's alive, and I remember his face, and there's only two EMTs that died. He came out with his orange helmet, eyes were red, and I said, dude, what are you doing here? I saw private ambulances. I didn't see a Fire Department ambulance. He said, I'm looking for my father. I said, where's your father? He said, in the World Trade Center.

So I told him to get in the ambulance because he was still susceptible to orders. He wasn't in a denial/agitation stage. So I had him back there and I figured the nun -- I said to him there's a nun back here who's an EMT would talk to him. She talks to people for her life day in and day out. So our survivor is back there and we're picking up old people and stragglers, people that couldn't breathe, people that couldn't make it to the ferry. Because a block or two away was the ferry, and if you got to the ferry, you could see the water, sky blue and everything was beautiful. It was on the corner. I forgot which ferry it was. Solano would know. I got on the PA and I said -- because walking around was senseless because people had shields, you don't know who was a patient, who was



R. ERDEY

a cop. I said, anybody that needs medical attention, come this way.

Then I went to a grocery store and they opened the doors because the power was out and I said, I need water, because I had an old cup. I grabbed a jug of water and I said, I'm not buying it, I'm taking it. No, I understand. Because it was for a patient. It wasn't for me. So I gave her water. I came back in there and I said where's the EMT? Gone. I was furious because now he went back in there. I wish I knew his name.

Q. Do you know where he was from, what battalion? What was the status of the buildings at that point?

A. They're gone.

Q. Did you see them collapse?

A. No. Somebody said a tower collapsed while we were cleaning up. I'm thinking, what's he talking about? On our ride back down there, I'm looking and I said, wow, it's really on fire now. I'm looking and I said, not for nothing, but I think the World Trade Center is down. I said, I'll tell you when I get up to the New York Telephone building. I looked again and I says it's down because my eyes watered up and I turned

R. ERDEY

back to the window and I said, sister, if you look to your left, that's where the World Trade Center used to be, and she says you're kidding me.

Q. Did it look like one had collapsed or both of them?

A. They were both gone. Both of them.

Q. Do you know what time about that was?

A. We didn't even know that we were one minute from the tower collapsing if it wasn't for that engine company telling us. We went to the engine company to get closure, to 216. It's funny how people need closure. I especially need closure. We needed closure and we went down there and we brought flowers to Quinn, to them, and to 49 for Carlos, and one of the guys was there and he said, I recognize your voice. The other guy was there and he goes, you know, we talked about you guys for four days. So they talked about us and we talked about them. So we said, what happened? Well, he got hit with a body, which we already knew, and he said, he saved us. I spoke to Ken Fried, who was not there, but I was speaking to him on-line and I asked to make sure all my brothers who went to the Fire side were alive. I said I picked up the guy who got hit with the body, and he said, oh, that's Danny Suhr. So

R. ERDEY

that's how I found out his name.

Q. Who is Ken?

A. Ken Fried. He's a fireman. He was not there at that time, but he's on the Fire side. I had five or six people who I was partners with that went to be firemen.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. So I wanted to know if they all lived, so every time I saw a name on-line, are you there? You know, it could be their father or their mother. So that's how I found out the fireman's name. I also found out that Ken's father came from Engine 216, so that's how they knew the fireman. He told us that he didn't save just you, he saved the battalion, that fire engine company. I was like wow. So when we went down there, that same day the picture of him was in the Post. I said, that was him. They saw us, we spoke, we found out from Engine 216, from those two young guys, we were one minute away from, I believe that tower, and he saved that company because they all followed us, which I didn't know. The cop who escorted us knows. I don't know if you were there, but that was some caravan that was in the way.

Before that you asked me about the New York

R. ERDEY

Presbyterian ambulance and the number. I don't have the number. I have it written down at home. But I called up New York Presbyterian. I said tell me what happened to number so-and-so. I can't think of the number. They said, I can't tell you what happened to the people, because I asked what happened to the people. I told them who I was. I said, I'm EMT Erdey from the Fire Department. I was memorizing their number in case I met up with them. They came out to talk to us. Please tell me about those people. I can't tell you about those people. All right. So I said, then listen to what I'm saying. Don't tell me about the people; tell me about the ambulance itself. How is ambulance such-and-such number? It was three numbers. She said, I can't tell you about the people. I said, no, listen to what I'm saying. Tell me about the ambulance. She said the ambulance disintegrated.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I saw a New York Presbyterian ambulance. Now I have to know about it. If you want the number, you leave me your number and I'll call you. Okay. But I said what happened to this number? Oh, well, those two

R. ERDEY

people, one put on his helmet, crashed through the window, broke both his legs, and the other one ran over him to get inside. They both lived. I gave that dude my number to give to that dude who was driving because that's the dude that came out, and I said, please have that dude call me. Well, I never got a phone call from that dude. Otherwise I'd have the name for you. But those two guys lived. Those two guys you might want to speak to because both his legs got broke. He was there and stayed there. But he hasn't called me.

I'm kind of pissed I didn't get that guy's name, who came out of that smoke. If there's one image that's burned through my head, it's Danny with his teeth loose and that kid coming out of the black smoke.

Q. Is there anything else that you recall?

A. No.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Okay. We'll conclude the interview. I want to thank you for the time and your participation in this event. It's really, really important. The time now is 0857 hours and we'll conclude the interview.

File No. 9110026

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ERIC HANSEN

Interview Date: October 10, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Hansen

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time now is 1013 hours. I am Lieutenant Monte Feiler with the New York City Fire Department Investigations and Trials. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and command.

A. My name is Eric K. Hansen, badge number 1258 at 22 Battalion, Fifth Division.

Q. EMT?

A. EMT.

Q. We're conducting the interview at interview room A at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, 9 Metrotech, New York, Brooklyn.

What I need from you, sir, is a scenario of what occurred on the morning of September 11th in response to the World Trade Center incident.

A. Approximately 8:50, 8:55 I was ordered by Captain Olsen of the 22 Battalion to respond with LSU5, which I normally drive, to World Trade Center Tower 1 due to a plane crash accident. I got onto the Verrazano, went into the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, came out of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and

Hansen

I was on West Street, headed up towards Liberty. Upon there, I saw Chief McCracken of the department running southwards and I saw the Fire Commissioner also running southwards. I saw Chief Gombo directing me to go down a block towards Barclay Street, because there was debris coming down at that time. This was approximately 9:15 or so, a.m.

I proceeded down towards Barclay Street due to the fact Chief Gombo stated there was debris falling out of the windows. It wasn't debris. It was bodies coming down, being pushed out -- coming out of the World Trade Center Tower 1. At that time, I proceeded down towards Barclay Street. There was a traffic tie-up at Barclay Street. I was then directed by police to move my LSU5 out of the way of traffic and to move down towards Murray Street.

I proceeded down, I turned left onto Murray Street to where I stayed there until I got further orders from another EMS or Fire Department personnel. I stayed down there on Murray Street and I was directed to go down towards North End Avenue. I was on the corner of Murray Street and North End Avenue where I parked my rig. At that time, I heard what had sounded like a train, a freight train



Hansen

coming through the streets, and it was one of the building caving down.

At that time, I did not know there was a second plain that hit the second World Trade Center. I was really confused at the sound and the situation until I saw the heavy of dust and smoke coming towards -- up the street and I stayed in the ambulance where I saw Chief Fran Pascale, Chief Fran Pascale asked me to direct all the ambulances out of the area and to move up towards some place like Warren Street.

Q. Where were you at that time when you saw Chief Pascale?

A. I saw Chief Pascale at north -- excuse me. I saw Chief Pascale at North End Avenue and she was -- everybody was running for their lives literally. I left my ambulance parked at the corner of Murray and North End Avenue and I directed all the ambulances to go down towards North End Avenue and Warren to where it would be a little more safer.

We got here at Warren Street to where -- I couldn't find Chief Pascale and I couldn't find the people. There was an ambulance backup because we just couldn't get out of the area. Everything was tied down.

Hansen

At that time, there was a second freight train. It sounded like a second freight train running through the street. That was Tower 2 collapsing at that time. We were all down a one-way Street, I believe it was on Warren Street, and we ducked both into lobbies of buildings to protect ourselves from the second wave of smoke and dust and gases that were coming out of the World Trade Center. At that time, there was speculations that the World Trade Center had collapsed, but still over the radio communications was very mixed up. Nobody knew where they were going. I wound up at River Terrace, which was right off of Warren Street and I was directed by Captain Abdo, he works in the Division, he just made captain. He used to work here, on the seventh floor.

I was directed by Captain Abdo about a good 45 minutes to an hour later, he stated that there was a possible chance of a gas main leak in the area. People started to scurry. I stayed and remained with the Captain until further orders that he gave me, assisting moving the traffic along. Captain Abdo, then I was directed by Captain Abdo to go to 23rd Street and Chelsea Pier to where I made my way.

Hansen

It took some time to make my way. I made my way on down there. I was down there approximately 11, 1130.

Q. You took the LSU truck with you?

A. I took the LSU truck with me. It was covered with dust and debris and all that stuff. I took it down there to where doctors and nurses wanted the supplies from my LSU. I said, I cannot give them out until I had permission from the sector commander at that time. I had to wait a good hour until a sector commander gave me permission to offload all my equipment, except for the weapons-of-war kits, the atropine. The atropine, which did I not offload and I kept them on my rig until someone gave me off orders to offload that. Because I carry quite a few bags of those on the LSU.

Q. What kind of equipment were you giving out?

A. I was giving out backboards, I was giving out long boards, I was giving out regulators, splints, traction splints, water, saline. Everything that an ambulance carried, I carried: Suction, portable suction. I gave out the

Hansen

multilaetor, two of them, and I set up the M tank for an asthma section. That they had already prepared by the pier, which I set up for them so they had an asthma table.

I was told as soon as I finished there, I was directed to go to station 11 to pick up more equipment and supplies and to go to Bellevue and pick up more equipment and supplies and to bring it down to 23rd Street, Chelsea Pier.

Q. When you originally received the call, what frequency did you get it on?

A. I was told by my Captain go to Richmond frequency. I stayed on Richmond frequency until I got onto -- because I was not told by Richmond frequency to switch over to citywide, stay on Richmond frequency.

Q. Who directed you? Which Captain at the battalion?

A. Captain Olsen. I stayed on the Richmond frequency until I hit Vesey Street, Vesey Street and West Street, and I had to call up Richmond and they turned around and said, "your location that you're supposed to be at" -- this was about 9:30. I stayed there until I was ordered by Chief -- this is after

Hansen

Chief Gombo. I just wanted to find out where my new dropoff zone was supposed to be set up.

Q. When you were coming over the Verrazano Bridge, you were by yourself?

A. Yes. I'm a single-man unit.

Q. What did you see?

A. I saw -- the only thing I saw was World Trade Center 1 with smoke coming out of the top of the tower.

Q. Was that the south building or the north building?

A. I have no idea which one it was. I believe it was the north building first.

Q. So when you were coming over the bridge one building was struck?

A. Yes.

Q. Not the second?

A. No, sir.

Q. Were you present when the second building was struck?

A. Definitely.

Q. Did you see the plane hit it?

A. No, sir, I couldn't, because I was down at Ground Zero, which is now Ground Zero, getting

Hansen

directions where to drop off my supplies. My supplies, -- I was getting directions to move further on down, down to Barclay Street to where I was at that time was a shower of debris of human bodies coming down off the building. You.

Q. You said you ran into Chief McCracken.

Did you have a conversation with Chief McCracken?

A. I did not have a conversation. I just saw him running south from where I was, off of Vesey Street, and west and I saw the Commissioner running south also, but they were on the Hudson River side of the street and they were running southwards when they turned around and said there was debris coming down from the buildings.

Q. You're talking about Commissioner Von Essen?

A. Von Essen.

Q. You had a conversation with Chief Gombo?

A. Chief Gombo, I said, "Chief, where do you want my LSU?" That's LSU5 from Staten Island. He turned around and said, "Get the rig and get it out of here. There is debris coming down." It was a quick -- that was the extent of the conversation.

Q. Did you have contact with other EMS or

Hansen

firefighters?

A. I had contact with some -- it looked like it was a Battalion Chief who told me to take my rig and get it out of here, get it out of harm's way, because stuff is coming down.

Q. Do you know who he was?

A. No idea. No idea.

Q. Then you got up to, I think you said Barclay?

A. Yes. When I got up to Barclay, I was told to move down towards Murray Street.

Q. Who told you that?

A. Well, the Chief said, "Get it out of here and get it out of harm's way." The Battalion Chief that was standing there right at the engines, and I moved it up towards Murray Street and I was down at Murray and west and then I was told to move up to Murray and -- Murray and North End Avenue. I parked it on the corner and like I said, at that time everything was calm until the freight train rumbled in the streets and it was still not knowing what really took place or what happened.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A. Never entered any of the buildings -- any

Hansen

of the World Trade Center proper, no.

Q. Other than the chiefs that you mentioned, did you run across any other EMS people that you recognized?

A. I ran across Valerie Longo of the 22 Battalion, who had a rig out there.

Q. Where did you see her?

A. She was parked on Murray Street.

Q. Murray and what?

A. Murray and -- between North End Avenue and West Side.

Q. She was taking care of patients?

A. No. They were standing by or parked on a 45-degree angle as we were told to do. There were a whole bunch of ambulances from New Jersey, Hatzolah and a few other places. The Fire Department ambulances, they were parked at a 45-degree angle. I took my LSU knowing that if I had to get out and -- to set up a triage area some place, I had to be ready to go at any moment.

Q. Just for the record, can you just tell me what LSU stands for?

A. Logistics support unit. And that handles supplies for mass casualty incident to a certain



Hansen

number of people.

Q. Did there come a time where you ever did switch over to citywide?

A. There came a time when I switched over to Citywide after I spoke to Chief Abdo -- I mean Captain Abdo of the 5th Division.

Q. Any contact with any other EMS personnel?

A. The only contact I had with other EMS personnel were from other boroughs and I did not know them at that time.

Q. Any voluntaries?

A. I saw voluntary ambulances, Jersey ambulances, and I saw Hatzolah ambulances down there, but I did not recognize anybody.

Q. How about firefighters? Anybody you recognized?

A. There was no firefighters that I did recognize, at all. I mean but there was fire companies down there.

Q. So after you were directed to go up to Chelsea by Chief Pascale, you stayed at the Chelsea Pier area in the triage?

A. Right. Until 8:30 that night.

Q. Did you witness the buildings collapse or

Hansen

you heard it?

A. I did not witness the buildings collapse due to the fact that the other buildings were shadowing the structures from where I was. I was, you know, too close, too far in and right next to the buildings to where you couldn't see anything. But it was just a plume of smoke and dust and debris coming down. My LSU was covered with soot and debris. I had to clear that off and I stood there or my LSU stood, it bears marks, baptized under fire.

Q. Was anybody with you? Did you pick up any personnel?

A. I didn't pick up anybody at all. I just needed my orders to drop my supply load that I had in the back here or where to set up a triage area. When I got my orders to go down to 23rd Street, I was told to set up my triage area at 23rd Street.

Q. By Chief Pascale?

A. By Chief Pascale and Captain Abdo.

Q. When you got to Chelsea Pier, who was in charge there from EMS?

A. I could not recognize anybody from -- I did not recognize anybody. Just because I probably

Hansen

had -- I don't know. I was stunned by the whole situation. Stunned or upset by the whole situation, but I know he was a EMS Captain that told me to drop off --

Q. Male? Female?

A. It was a male. He told me to drop off my supplies there and to help set up 23rd Street as a triage point area.

Q. Did you have any further radio communications with anyone?

A. The only time I had -- my next radio communications were approximately around 5:00 o'clock, when they were trying to take roll call of ambulances in the area. It might have been just a little earlier. I'm not quite sure.

Q. Is there anything else that is important between the time frame that we were talking about that you would like to add?

A. No, not at this time. But it was -- I did dive into buildings and there was one doorman that was -- a doorman that was going to lock the lobby or this door. I don't even know the building because it was like it happened and a Police Officer said, don't lock it, because other people were still

Hansen

coming from the plume of debris and smoke and everybody made a mad dash.

Q. That was before the buildings collapsed?

A. No. This was on the second building that collapsed. The second collapse. I do not know what transpired. I did not know there was a second plane hit. I did not know with that bowl of thunder and the noise, I did not know that the World Trade Center caved in. I was totally unaware until someone said, the World Trade Center collapsed. It was too unbelievable to believe that such a thing could happen.

Q. We are going to conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time. Thank you for participating in this. It's very important.

A. No problem. No problem.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: We conclude the interview at 1034 hours.

**File No. 9110027**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**EMT JUSTIN LIM**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria**

Lim

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 10, 2001. The time is 8:57 a.m. hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and title and assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Justin Lim, Shield 5016, EMT, Battalion 20.

Q. Justin, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Enroute to the alarm, can you tell me what you saw?

A. Enroute to the alarm we saw both of the buildings giving up with a lot of smoke and we actually saw a little fire from the West Side Highway.

Q. When you arrived on the scene, where did you park your ambulance?

A. West and Vesey.

Q. Can you indicate on the map with a number

Lim

1 where you parked your vehicle.

A. (Complied with request.)

Q. Whom did you first report to when you arrived there?

A. At the time there was no officers, but there were two medics on scene, also from Battalion 20, which told us that we were supposed to park our buses in the opposite direction of the World Trade Center in order for immediate egress.

Q. Were you given a specific assignment by them after you turned your vehicles around?

A. At the time we turned our vehicles around, we started to gather our equipment and we had treated actually several ESU and firefighters for minor injuries before we could actually make it to the Trade Center.

Q. This was on Vesey and West where you treated them in?

A. Yes.

Q. After you treated these injured people, did you transport them anywhere?

A. At the time they didn't really want to leave the scene and we just got a lot of the dust and dirt out of their eyes and we were trying to

Lim

evaluate them to see how serious their injuries were and at the time there wasn't any major injuries. It was just a lot of dust, minor abrasions, so we let them go on their way because they refused to be transported anywhere.

Q. After they left you, what did you do next?

A. We started gathering our equipment, which consisted of our helmet, our turn out coat and first aid bag, AED and oxygen bag.

Q. And where did you respond?

A. We started walking towards the World Trade Center and at that time that's when the collapse happened.

Q. That's when the first building collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you do when the first building collapsed?

A. When the first building collapsed, we both started -- my partner and I both started walking back to the vehicle and we opened up one of the compartment doors where we put all our equipment in and as it was coming down, we started seeing a mob of people start running towards us. So we opened up our back doors and we put in as many people as we



Lim

could and then my partner was kind of motioning to the civilians and the ESU workers, that whoever wanted to get a ride, they just hop in and we would take them.

And this whole time the building was still coming down. It was only halfway down. I proceeded to get into the driver's seat and there were like several people running up to the bus saying, "get out of here." And we actually ended up driving with several people on the hood and people were hanging off the sides of the mirrors, off the back step of the ambulance, and I'd say we probably got about like 30 -- maybe 30 people out of there before it actually came completely down and the smoke came.

Q. Where did you respond to when you had all these people? Where did you drive them to?

A. We started going, I believe it was -- I guess it was Barclay or Murray. One of those two block. It was just before that school or the college. At that time everybody got off and I guess a couple of privates and I believe two FDNY ambulances were there and I guess we started staging around that area.

Q. Can you indicate on the map where you

Lim

believe the staging area was set up?

A. Between Warren and Murray.

Q. Between Warren and Murray on West?

A. Yes.

Q. You stayed there for how long?

A. We stayed there probably the duration.

What happened was there was no officers and I started taking down the people's units. There was like the Jewish hospitals, the private hospitals, a voluntary ambulance there, there was two city FDNY units in there. On a napkin I wrote down all their units and I gave it back to Manhattan South, telling them I had about ten units that were being staged. So that's pretty much where we were.

Q. And you were at this location when the second tower came down also?

A. Actually, when the second tower came down we were probably at Barclay and Murray and then we went to Warren and Murray. We dropped off people here before the second one came. Because that's when they started coming out and they wanted to go back and get their friend or whatever.

Q. So you dropped off people at West and Barclay?

Lim

A. Yes, West and Barclay.

Q. And then you proceeded to West and Murray?

A. At this time we were going to try to turn around, I believe it was, and then when we started turning around the second building came down. So we then turned around, and that's how we ended up there.

Q. So when the second building came down, you're indicating you were at Barclay and West?

A. Yes.

Q. Or West between Barclay and Vesey?

A. Right. After that then we were treating some minor aided again. It was all debris and dirt and when the second building came down we, again, took as many people as we could and then we moved here.

Q. You moved to Murray and West?

A. Correct.

Q. Correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Do you remember unit designations from these units that were with you or the names of people who were with you?

A. I know that --

Lim

Q. To the best of your memory.

A. I know there was one guy from a Queens hospital. I was in the academy with him and he was there, I believe, with a voluntary ambulance.

Q. Do you remember what his name was?

A. I believe his name was James Mahoney.

Q. James Mahoney?

A. Yes. And then there was another Jewish hospitals there. I think Hatzolah I think it was and then there was another guy that had a gold shield on and he had --

Q. The pais? The curls?

A. Yeah, the curls and he was trying to direct everybody but, you know, but he was still caught in the chaos. He wasn't really doing much. He was yelling at everybody. So he started trying to take people on his own and transport people that haven't even been triaged. So he wasn't any help. And by that time, before they yelled for a gas leak for another evacuation, there were a few lieutenants there and they kind of gave direction, and there were staging areas all over the place.

Q. How long do you believe you remained at Murray and West?

Lim

A. I'd probably say maybe 40 minutes.

That's actually before -- a couple of minutes before they started assigning the units to the Chelsea Pier. So we treated who we could and we asked everybody if they wanted to be transported and most of them said no, and then they reassigned us to Chelsea Pier.

Q. So from Murray and West you responded to the Chelsea Pier; is that correct?

A. They started assigning people there. We were kind of blocked in and then we -- they said everybody started running towards us and then a few minutes later we heard there was a gas leak. So that's when they wanted us to evacuate. So at that time we took -- I believe we took two firefighters and we went back to Chelsea Pier and we dropped them off half way, because they wanted to get out.

Q. Do you have any idea approximately what time this was?

A. No.

Q. You can use the time line, I don't know if this will help had you at all. The north tower went down at 10:30, 10:29.

A. (No response.)

Lim

Q. Was it after 12? Was it before 12? Noon?

A. It was probably around noonish.

Q. Around noonish?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this, to the events that happened prior to 12:00 noon?

A. As far as criticism?

Q. Anything you want to tell me. Anything you saw, anything you heard, any emotions you felt, any feelings.

A. In the beginning when we first staged by West and Vesey, I had a lot of firefighters that are friends from my department that walked over to the building about ten minutes before we started to and that was the time the building collapsed. They probably just got to the front door. We treated firefighters, lieutenants, captains. Actually the biggest downfall to this whole thing was probably the communications with the private hospitals, because some of them didn't have unit designations, just vehicle ID numbers. They had no clue what to do. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] they

Lim

basically didn't want to listen. Initially they didn't want to give information. You know, it took me a while to convince them, you know, we have to stage here, because there were a lot of wounded. We were actually trying to stage there and get them treating patients so that we could turn back and see if we could get anybody else. That's when they called the gas leak and everybody had to turn and run.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. That's it.

MR. ECCLESTON: This concludes our interview. The time is 9:09. I thank you very much for your corporation. The counter on the tape is 212.

**File No. 9110028**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**PARAMEDIC KEVIN KELLEHER**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason**



K. KELLEHER

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time is 833 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Kevin Kelleher, paramedic, assigned to Battalion 20.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present in the room is

--

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: Paramedic Felix Marquez, assigned to Battalion 20, shield number 1379.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Responding to the call, can you tell me what you saw?

A. I was responding down the Sheridan Expressway out of the Bronx. We were able to see smoke from both towers. We got on the FDR. As we are heading down the FDR, we started noticing people coming towards us. There was a -- once we got south of the Manhattan

K. KELLEHER

Bridge, we couldn't see any -- we could only see one tower in the cloud of smoke.

As we got to the end of the FDR, we tried to get to the west side. We got down to the tunnel at the end and three quarters of that had been closed down. We thought it had collapsed. So we turned around and tried heading east towards the World Trade Center. We responded to the staging area, it was supposed to be Church and Vesey. We were heading west on Maiden Lane, when over the air we started hearing people screaming that the second tower was coming down.

At that time, everything just went black. We got covered in a cloud of dust and debris. We made a quick left-hand turn on Liberty and Trinity Place, I believe it is, right on Liberty south and left on Broadway. We started heading south on Broadway. We got flagged down at Exchange Place and Broadway, where a Police Lieutenant complaining of difficulty breathing. So we stopped the vehicle there and began treatment on him.

Q. What were the extent of his injuries?

A. He was complaining of shortness of breath basically. We had a physician and an EMT with us at the time.

K. KELLEHER

Q. Who were the physician and the EMT, do you recall their names?

A. The EMT was Juan Vega. I don't know who the physician was. I'm not really sure who the physician was. I know he was a pediatrician from Jacobi Hospital.

Q. You brought him with you?

A. Yes.

Q. I didn't recall. Do you know the name of the EMT?

A. The EMT is Juan Vega.

Q. You picked up this police officer and then you proceeded where with him?

A. We proceeded south on Broadway. We were trying to clear the area because we didn't know what else was in danger of coming down. We wanted to get to a safe area. We proceeded down Broadway to Staten Island Ferry Terminal at South Ferry.

Q. When you got down there, what did you do?

A. We got there, we were met by about a thousand civilians. No other public safety personnel. We gathered all the civilians up, got them out of the dust and debris, got them inside the building. After about 15 minutes or so, two more ambulances arrived. Some

K. KELLEHER

police arrived.

The police had found a load of busses that were lined up by the Staten Island Ferry, so they moved everybody that was not injured out of the area on the busses.

Q. Do you know where they took those people?

A. North.

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: They took them north down the FDR, I believe it was, and they were trying to load up ferries to get people out of Manhattan, into Jersey, and also to Staten Island.

A. They wanted to get everybody out of the area. After we secured the area, anybody that was injured for -- we set up a staging area and a treatment area at the Staten Island Ferry terminal, on the second floor we set the treatment area. Busses were staged outside. That's about it. We stayed there for most of the rest of the day.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map I provided for you the number 1 where you picked up that injured police officer first?

A. Sure.

Q. You picked up the injured police officer on Exchange and Broadway?

K. KELLEHER

A. Yes.

Q. Then you proceeded to where?

A. We proceeded to the Staten Island Ferry terminal. It's not shown on the map. It's south on Broadway.

Q. What vehicle were you in?

A. We were in vehicle 110.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this?

A. Just that when we were down there, we didn't know if we were cut off from the north. That's why we secured the Staten Island Ferry terminal. If we had patients, the only way we figured we were getting them out of there was on the ferry. So we wanted a secure area so we could treat them and get them out. It was rather eerie not hearing anything on the radio after the second tower came down. The radio was dead. For a long time we didn't know if we were the only people left down there.

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: It was amazing how responding before the second tower fell and all the commotion in the street. Once the ball, it looked like a ball, was rolling towards us, this smoke and debris. Once it hit us, everything just

K. KELLEHER

became silent. You could see people screaming and yelling but you couldn't hear anybody. Just quiet.

A. (inaudible).

PARAMEDIC MARQUEZ: Everything just became dark, pitch black and quiet. You saw people screaming, yelling and running, but you couldn't hear anything. Just silence, just complete silence. You couldn't hear.

MR. ECCLESTON: I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. The interview is concluded at 840. The setting on the tape counter is 143.

**File No. 9110029**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**PARAMEDIC FELIX MARQUEZ**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason**

F. MARQUEZ

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time is 819 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank title and assigned command area regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Felix Marquez, paramedic assigned to Battalion 20.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also in the room is?

PARAMEDIC KELLEHER: Paramedic Kevin Kelleher, shield 5044, assigned to Battalion 20.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was assigned to 03 x-ray. We were dispatched to the World Trade Center.

Q. En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A. En route to the alarm as we was on the Sheridan Expressway, we was able to see the towers on fire. We went down to the World Trade Center, down the FDR, down the east side.

Q. When you arrived at the World Trade Center, where did you park your vehicle and what vehicle was



it?

A. It was vehicle 110, I was the driver of the vehicle. We exited off the FDR around Battery Park. We was headed westbound down Maiden Lane when tower two collapsed. When tower two collapsed, we made a left on to Liberty back on to Broadway, trying to make our way away from the tower. It was very hard to see due to all the rubble and the dust. I remember on our radio was people screaming, asking for back up, telling that the tower was collapsing.

We were trying to make our way to help to get people out, but we was unable to so we headed down, south down Broadway where we picked up a police Lieutenant, who was in distress. We put him into the back of the ambulance, me and Kevin, and we proceeded south bound down Broadway.

Q. After you picked up this police officer, where did you respond with him?

A. We headed -- we just kept driving until we got to a safe distance away because we was unable to see due to all the dust and the debris and all the stuff that was falling. We just kept driving down, southbound down Broadway, until you couldn't go more no more. We ended up at South Ferry.

F. MARQUEZ

Q. What happened with this police officer, did you --

A. This police officer was at the tower, and he was able to get away. He was complaining of severe respiratory distress, so we got him in the back and we started treating him. As I was driving down, my partner, an EMT named, Juan Vega, was treating the patient. We stopped at South Ferry to proceed with our treatment and care for this police officer.

Q. Did you turn over care and treatment to somebody else? Did you stay with him or did you go back up to the site?

A. No, we stayed with the police officer and since we made South Ferry we realized this was a pretty safe distance away from the tower, a good place to reset staging. So me and my partner, Kevin Kelleher, got on the air and we said staging at South Ferry.

Q. This was basically the first time you parked your vehicle. Can you indicate on the map I provided to you approximately where you stopped and parked your vehicle?

A. Our first stop when we picked up the police officer was about Liberty and -- Exchange, sorry. We came down Maiden Lane down Broadway. We got flagged

F. MARQUEZ

down around Exchange and Broadway to pick up the police Lieutenant. That was our first stop, when we picked him up.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map with a number 1. Okay. Then the next stop where you stopped your vehicle?

A. It's not on this map. It's at the South Ferry, where the ferry goes to Staten Island.

Q. When you stopped at South Ferry you set up a triage?

A. Yes, we set up staging.

Q. How long did you stay there for?

A. I stayed there for approximately 12 hours. I was there for approximately 12 hours. There was a lot of patients over there complaining of distress. City workers, me and my partner parked the ambulance and started treating patients.

Q. You remained in that staging area, you didn't go back up to Ground Zero to the site?

A. Not until later on that evening.

Q. Not until later on that evening. Okay. Who was the officer running that staging area, do you recall?

A. Yes, after approximately an hour, hour, 45

F. MARQUEZ

minutes, an hour, Chief Basile came to the scene.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. We was by Maiden Lane and Broadway, in that area.

Q. What were you doing there when the tower collapsed?

A. We were responding to a unit in distress screaming for medics.

Q. You were still driving?

A. We were still driving, yes. We was trying to make our way to the corner of Church and Broadway.

Q. Did you make any radio communications that might be important to us?

A. Yes, we let the dispatcher know that that unit that was in distress, and screaming for paramedics, we told him that we would respond to that location. Dispatcher acknowledged it and we proceeded 63 en route to Church and -- I believe it was Church and Broadway. Church and Vesey, sorry. Church and Vesey.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this, any other information you might have, any feelings or emotions, anything you need to add?

F. MARQUEZ <sup>7</sup>

A. It was a hectic day. Other than that, we did the best we could do. That's pretty much it.

MR. ECCLESTON: Thank you very much for your time. The time is now 826. This concludes our interview. The setting on the tape recorder is 124.

**File No. 9110030**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**LIEUTENANT PATRICK SCARINGELLO**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason**

P. SCARINGELLO

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 10, 2001.

The time is 6:16 a.m. This is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command area of the Fire Department regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Lieutenant Patrick Scaringello, assigned to Battalion 49, Bureau of EMS.

Q. You were assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A. I was told to stage at 21 Street and the 59 Street Bridge. Three of my units were already being dispatched across the bridge to respond to the World Trade Center, which would have been 49 Victor, 45 Adam and 49 Henry.

Time frame, as far as I put the time frame, I can't remember exactly. I don't believe they had completely cleared over the bridge when I was told to respond with the units from the staging area, which was 49 Charlie, 46 William, I believe it was William, and

49 x-ray, I believe. I'm not too sure right now what they were.

I was mid span at the 59 Street Bridge when I looked to my left and I saw the both towers were involved midway up. We then proceeded off the bridge and I opted against going down the FDR Drive because I figured that was going to be backed up with traffic. We took the city streets down, local streets, mainly on Broadway. Then I believe it was Second Avenue, we switched back and forth and I was following two unmarked cars. Unmarked law enforcement vehicles.

We got down to Broadway, where originally we were told to stage at Vesey and Church. I couldn't get any of my vehicles down Vesey and Church because there were numerous vehicles parked there. So I parked them on Broadway, I continued down, parked my command car on Cortlandt between Broadway and Church. I then reported to the triage area at Church and Fulton, where I was advised to try to get the units, trying to get things as close as we could to that area.

Then I went back up. I went back up to Broadway and advised the units to follow me down to Fulton, where I staged at Fulton and Broadway and reported down to the triage unit. As I reported back



to the triage area, Captain Olszewski had requested that I find some more triage tags, to help in triage. In doing so I was also helping to evacuate people from buildings and they were coming across the street and out of the subway.

I got back to my truck. I got triage tags. I went back down to Fulton and Church, whereupon I found the Captain. Lt. Davila, Lt. Medjuck were elsewhere treating patients. I started to treat patients on my own when I heard the explosion from up above. I looked up, I saw smoke and flame and then I saw the top tower tilt, start to twist and lean.

With that, there was a massive influx of humanity rushing past me. Most of the people had made it through the triage area. Some had stumbled and fallen. I grabbed them, helped them underneath, and behind a police van, whereupon I put my body over them, about 4 people that I can remember. We rode out the first tower in that location. Once it had lightened up, because the smoke and ash had darkened everything down, once it had lightened up, I instructed all four people to hold my hand. We crossed over on Fulton against the wall from Saint Pauls cemetery and I instructed them to follow me up to Broadway against, on

the sidewalk against the wall.

Halfway up, someone met us there, I believe from the Police Department, I handed them off to them and returned back into Fulton and Church. I was assisting in pulling more people out from debris, when I heard the second tower explode. When I tried to evacuate the area, by running up Fulton, got halfway up. I couldn't get into any doorway, where I found a window that was partially broken, I broke the rest of the glass and went through and into the building.

Found myself in a lobby of sorts, I believe it was the Thompson's Financial Building. I entered into the lobby. I found approximately 50 people. I announced who I was, asked if there was any police officers or firemen in the building or in the lobby. I had one fireman I identified complaining of a laceration to the back of his left leg. There was a Port Authority police officer, myself and the police officer tried to bandage the fireman's leg as best we could, with whatever we could find. I then instructed all the people there that -- once the outside cleared from the smoke and debris from the second tower, I walked them out the door, again holding hands across the street.

When we got across Broadway, I told them to make a left and head north on Broadway. Once all the police had evacuated that building, I went back down Fulton and again continued to try to find people in the rubble.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map exactly where you parked your vehicle or to the best of your knowledge when you arrived on the scene?

A. When I first arrived on the scene, I was halfway down Cortlandt Street, reported to the triage area, which was in front of the Millennium Hotel. I ran down Cortlandt to Church and up Church to the Millennium, where they advised me to restage my vehicles on Broadway. I went back to my vehicle. Made a u-turn on Cortlandt, came up to Broadway, and parked it on the corner of Fulton and Broadway and then reported back down to the triage area.

Q. Can you just put a number 1 where you first parked your vehicle and number 2 where you moved your vehicle to? Do you happen to remember which vehicle number this was?

A. 840.

Q. 840. Did you ever enter any of the World Trade Center buildings prior to their collapse?

7  
P. SCARINGELLO

A. No, never got a chance to. I was involved in patient care at the triage area.

Q. Did you remove any civilians to hospitals or just away from the scene?

A. Just away from the scene. Most of the civilians that I did see, did have contact with were walking wounded. They were very ambulatory. Most who had any sort of injury did not affect them moving away from the scene.

Q. You had told me when you were traveling there you had several units with you. Can you tell me the personnel there were on those units, to the best of your recollection?

A. Two of the units were voluntary units. I think it was 49 x-ray or 49 William. The other one was 46, either a 46 William, one was a William, one was a (inaudible).

Q. Do you know the names of the people that were on that unit?

A. No.

Q. How about any Fire Department units?

A. 49 Charlie was behind me. That was Brendon Mulroy and I think his partner was Mario, I'm not sure now. I think it was Mario Ramirez.

Q. That was the only Fire Department unit you had with you?

A. That was 49 Charlie, yes. The other three already went over the bridge. That was 9 Victor, 5 Adam and 9 Henry. They were already ahead of us.

Q. Okay. Was there any important radio communications that you made?

A. None other than advising Citywide where we were staged and what I had there and them telling me to respond. We responded I believe right after the second tower was hit. I think Citywide just pulled the pin.

No, I don't even think it was Citywide. I think we were still on Queens. Queens just said respond in, send everything in.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. What else do you need?

Q. Anything else you would like to add, any feelings, emotions, anything?

A. I did stay in the area. In fact I worked my way up because there was nobody else around, no EMS personnel, I worked my way up eventually to Church -- to Chambers and West, where they had a command post.

Q. What kind of command post is that?

P. SCARINGELLO

A. A haphazard one. Everybody was looking for some sort of direction to go in, but they were trying to regroup at the time.

Q. Do you remember who was in charge of the command post there?

A. Pick a Chief. Pick a Chief. They were all there and everybody had something to say. I inquired 4 or 5 times where my partner was.

Q. Can you tell me which Chiefs were there that you remember seeing?

A. J.P. Martin, Perrugia, Carassquillo. That's about all I can remember right now. But I was able to work my way back down West Street and I did find my partner, Lieutenant Yioras.

Q. Do you know about what time this was that you got to this command post?

A. It was well after tower one fell, which was the second tower.

Q. Well after meaning an hour, two hours, three hours?

A. No, I don't think it was an hour. It may have been maybe 40 minutes at most. I did find my partner. We then worked our way up West Street or down West Street toward the center again, where we came upon

a Captain, Captain McFarland. She instructed us that she was looking for some of our people that were there and she had instructed Lieutenant Yioras and I to work our way back up toward Church to see if anybody was there. We did go past -- we went up Church, we went up Vesey, past 7 Trade, which at the time didn't look like it was involved, but we found later on that it was. We crossed over. Then we wound up on Barclay. No, we wound up -- came up Vesey.

There was a -- they started setting up a medical triage treatment area in a building, an office building, lobby of an office building there. Chief Wells was there. Lieutenant Race, Chief Wells instructed me to set up transport and staging, which I did on Vesey. About that time is when Lieutenant Yioras advised me that he started getting chest pains.

We had it checked out. I then set up -- I brought a unit up, and was ready to have him transported along with EMT Adams, Paul Adams, who was also complaining of more pain. They were placed in an ambulance and they were dispatched to hospital 71. This is the part that steams me. Somewhere between where we sent them out from that section to hospital 71, the ambulance was stopped by one of our

Lieutenants. Told both of them to step out of the ambulance, that it wasn't an emergency, commandeered the ambulance and they were later on placed in another ambulance and then brought to hospital 71. Okay.

At that time, after they were gone, I worked my way back down with the voluntary units, I don't remember which ones they were, where I set up the voluntary units in the staging. I worked my way down to the corner of Church and Vesey, where I was told they brought a patient into the Church, which later I found out to be Father Judge.

They worked on Father Judge in the church where he expired. We then had a unit standing by. We put his body in an ambulance and dispatched that ambulance out. We then were told by PD that the area was possibly in a collapse zone because of tower 7. We evacuated the church. As I was leaving the church there was a small man sitting on one of the pews. I ran back in the Church. I found it to be one of the Fathers, a priest, saying his rosary. I went in and I excused myself for interrupting him in the middle of his rosary. I advised him we were in a collapse zone and we had to leave, which we did. Just before we left the church he advised me that the sacrament was still



in the tabernacle. I told him that I would try to find somebody to remove it. I then escorted him down the stairs. I handed him off to another person, to another set of EMTs, who walked him up the street.

Went back in the Church. I went up to the altar. I was looking, yelling for somebody who was there. No response. I quickly left the building because of the possibility of being in a collapse zone.

I then stayed down in that corner helping to evacuate people that came out of any of the other buildings.

Q. Do you know about what time we are talking now, time frame?

A. I would say probably about 45 minutes to an hour before 7 dropped, because when tower 7 dropped, I was on Vesey and Church.

Q. This was before tower 7 dropped?

A. This is just before tower 7 dropped.

Q. Tower 7 fell at approximately 5:25.

A. Like I said, I spent the majority of my time with the exception of the time that I went up to Chambers, all my time was spent on the east side of 7, because that's where my first three units came in on

the west side. The three units I brought in were on the east side. I tried to make sure those people were accounted for.

I got halfway up to the corner of Church and Vesey when tower 7 dropped, which basically the concussion just blew me across the street and I came up again besides, past Saint Pauls and it was already late at night and it was dark. The smoke didn't help it any, the dust and everything else. I was hit in the back of the head with something that came out of one of the buildings, which later I found out to be a water pitcher.

They had evacuated that medical zone earlier, which I was involved in making sure my vehicles were out of there, again, just making sure that nobody was in the area. They told me that they were relocating to Pace. I had started to come up, I tried to find my command car, which I knew where I left. Unfortunately it wasn't there. I came walking back. I went as far as Cortlandt and all the way back down to Barclay. I kept saying I knew where I left my command car, that's when I realized somebody had stolen my command car.

Q. Did you ever retrieve your command car?

A. From what I understood the next day somebody

said that they had called here asking if that was ours, they found it on 14 Street and Irving Avenue.

Q. We are going to try to concern with anything that happened before noon. That's what we are trying to concentrate on, not the later part of the day. Is there anything you need to add to this on anything that happened before 12 noon?

A. You know, I tell you the God's honest truth, Chris, once you got there I didn't even notice the time. Couldn't even tell time. Once the first tower came down, there was no such thing as a watch. My main function was looking for people, pulling people out and making sure they were safe. We never got into any building. The only thing I dealt with was from Cortlandt to Barclay, from Broadway to I guess West. That area was my main concentration, with the exception of the way I worked my way around to Chambers.

There was -- after both towers, I was still looking for people, I did run into Lieutenant Davila and another -- I'm sorry, not Davila, Lieutenant Medjuck and one of our telemetry doctors, I believe, they were telling me I had to go to -- they had to report to the Battery. When they started walking north and I kept telling them, no, you're going the wrong

way. They in turn walked back. We did go down to -- we did walk down to Beekman Downtown.

I went into the ER to check to see if any of our people were there. I came back out. They were gone. So I worked my way back into this area to get to try to reestablish something and find out who was there. I never again saw Captain Olszewski. I don't know what ever happened to her or where she went. I seemed to be the only one in this area. Everyone else I would imagine was gathered on the south, they were all around here.

Q. Along the west side?

A. Along the west side, because I think that's where the main body of people were advised to report to.

Q. Is there anything else you feel you need to add to this?

A. No, just that this was the big one everybody trains for.

MR. ECCLESTON: It certainly was. I thank you very much for the interview. The time is 6:41. The counter on the tape player is 375.

**File No. 9110035**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**PARAMEDIC DANIEL RIVERA**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins**

**MS. BASTEDENBECK:** Today is October 10th, 2001. The time is 1520 hours. My name is Chris Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, your rank, your title, where you're assigned.

**PARAMEDIC RIVERA:** Daniel Rivera, paramedic. I'm assigned to Battalion 31, Station 36 in Brooklyn.

**Q.** I'd just like you to give me the events of September 11th, 2001.

**A.** Okay. I basically started my -- we were gassing up at Tillary and Gold Street, which is two blocks away from the Brooklyn Bridge, when we heard the commotion over the PD radio that a plane just hit one of the towers.

We got on the bridge, because we were, again, two blocks away from there, and called the dispatcher over the radio -- actually over the phone cause the radio was really bad, and let them know that we were on our way to that call. She said 10-4, and she assigned us the job. That

was two minutes after the first plane hit.

Q. The dispatcher that you spoke to was the Brooklyn dispatcher?

A. Yes, Brooklyn.

So it took us about four minutes to get to the scene, because we were really, really close. We parked in front of the south tower right in front of the building.

Q. When you say "Right in front of the building" --

A. Right here. Actually in front of Four World Trade Center and in back of the south tower building.

Q. Okay. So somewhere right in the complex?

A. Right in the front right here. Maybe about one yard away from the south tower building.

Q. So that was when you first arrived?

A. Right.

There was a lot of people running just every direction, and several people were hurt. At that time I was treating one patient who was on the ground with a laceration to his forehead,

and actually I think it was a total of three patients, one asthmatic and I don't remember the other patient.

As I was treating the patient with the laceration and the asthmatic patient, that's when the second plane hit. All I heard was just a thunderous noise. As I looked up, I saw a ball of flames coming down. So everyone ran, the patients and everyone.

I ran not too far, a couple steps behind me, next to this doughnut cart, and hid under there until everything was clear and we went right back. Basically that's when I realized it was a terrorist attack.

Basically there were too many patients at the time, and you really couldn't triage anyone. It was just too dangerous. The scene wasn't safe. So we were just basically helping – at that point I don't know what I'm talking about. Everyone pretty much split up.

Then I went and I started directing people from the building, from the south tower, to get out, because as they were coming out of the building, they were getting on their phones



and talking and blocking the entrance. So we just said, "Let's go. You've got to go."

Q. Did you go into the building actually?

A. Yes, I went into the south tower building, but came right out right by the doors. I was trying to figure out why there wasn't too many people coming out. Like I said, there was a lot of people on their cell phones. I guess when they got to the lobby they thought it was safe and they decided to just get on their cell phones and talk and block the entrances. I was making sure that the entrances were clear so everyone can pass.

Q. The south tower, do you know if you were out on Liberty Street?

A. I don't remember.

Q. You don't remember. Okay.

A. I don't remember. You know what, I could have been on this side. I don't remember that.

Basically once I did that, I got together with my partner, and he moved the vehicle two blocks behind, somewhere around here somewhere, behind Four World Trade Center, I

think.

Q. Like by Trinity?

A. Yeah, around here, somewhere around -- yeah, Liberty and around here somewhere, Trinity and Liberty around here, I think.

Once we saw all that happening, we needed to move the bus.

Q. Okay.

A. So what else happened?

Q. When you moved out the bus out to there, did you see anybody? Any EMS supervisors or firemen supervisors?

A. There was a supervisor, but he was pretty much overwhelmed, but don't I remember his name. He was pretty much overwhelmed. It wasn't textbook. It was basically everyone for themselves after the second explosion.

I saw Manny Delgado. I saw some other people. Like I said, it was crazy, really crazy.

Everything pretty much calmed down. Once the second plane hit, it wasn't too bad. People still running out of the building. Body parts, I think that was the worst. Every three seconds I was counting -- I counted about 26

bodies when I was there. Every three seconds somebody was jumping.

At that point we were triage -- we were what they call front line medics. There was a captain there -- I don't know his name -- from EMS. He was setting everyone up, saying the medics were going to go in first, the EMTs were going in behind us.

They didn't let us go in because it was dangerous. We were right in front of the building still. We had no idea the buildings were going to collapse. That was dangerous where we were anyway.

I think it took about 30 minutes or 40 minutes after the second collapse. After the second plane hit the south tower building, and then the building collapsed.

Q. When the building collapsed where were you?

A. I was right in front of the building, right in front.

Q. You were still --

A. Right, because what happened was that --

Q. -- up near Trinity and Liberty?

A. No, we moved the bus to Trinity, but we went back to right in front of south tower, because triage -- I'm not too sure if it was over here. I think it was over here somewhere. Triage was still right in front of the south tower building.

Q. So you parked your vehicle?

A. My partner parked the vehicle, so I'm not too sure exactly where he parked it. I know he parked it two blocks up.

Q. And then you both went back into the complex?

A. I think it was around here somewhere. Around here somewhere we had triage. I know it was either this building or this building. I think it was over here we were triaging or over here. I'm not too sure. This is the south tower; right? This is the first one that collapsed. Yeah.

So we were pretty much -- most of the workers were inside this building. Like I said, I don't know if it's Five World Trade Center or Four World Trade Center. Most of them were in

the building because the chief or the captain said if you want you can stay inside that building. But I didn't feel safe, because I knew it was a terrorist attack, so I was scared. Every time you hear a plane, everyone would run. So I pretty much stood around here somewhere. I would see triage, but I was pretty much in between the two buildings.

Then that's when -- I kept on walking close to the south tower, and that's when that building collapsed.

Q. How did you know that it was coming down?

A. That noise. It was a noise.

Q. What did you hear? What did you see?

A. It was a frigging noise. At first I thought it was -- do you ever see professional demolition where they set the charges on certain floors and then you hear "Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop"? That's exactly what -- because I thought it was that. When I heard that frigging noise, that's when I saw the building coming down.

Q. What did you do?

A. Run. Most of the people ran into the

building, but I was just too far from the building to run into this triage building. I basically just ran up this way, right up here. I don't know if I was here or I was here. But I ran up -- I was really close. I thought I was dead because it was just too close to the building. It was just too close. I said, this is I don't know how many stories.

I ran as fast as I could maybe half a block and then hid between a building that had some kind of indentation like this, just hid like that. Actually I found a stretcher. I covered myself with a stretcher. That's when everything came down.

It was very dark for a few minutes. I think at that time my partner went under the fire truck, he was telling me. Everyone pretty much went on their own.

So once that cleared, I went right back and started pulling out people. Basically everyone was dead at that time with the first collapse.

Q. When that dust cleared and you went back, where did you go back to?

A. Right back to the triage, to triage.

Q. So in front of this building again?

A. Right, right here.

Q. In front of the World Trade Center, the northeast corner?

A. But there was nobody in there.

Apparently everyone ran and came out through here. So I ran in here. There was basically no one around just a few firefighters in shock. Then the next thing you know, the next building collapsed. I was right in front of that building.

Q. So you were still over there when the second building collapsed?

A. Right, because I ran back. Not too bright of me, of course. I ran right back in, and I was right -- I could actually touch the building when it collapsed, the second time when it collapsed.

But again, I was prepared because I heard that same noise. It was like a waterfall noise. That's when I ran. As I ran in here, I didn't run too far. Again, it was like a little indentation in the building where the same thing

again. That's when I jumped, because it was just too close. That one got me pretty good.

Q. So you were outside. You never ran inside a building when either one of the towers collapsed?

A. No. The first, south tower -- after the second plane hit, just to clear the doorway, and then I came running back out. I didn't stay there too long.

Q. As the collapses were going on, you never --

A. No, I was thinking about going into a building, because as I saw the first building collapse, I noticed that the first three or four floors, they were still pretty good. That was on my mind, wow, they were still pretty good. So when the second building collapsed, I was thinking of standing between the doors of the second collapse. Something told me no, just ran back.

Again, I ran up against one of the buildings there. Once everything settled again, it was dark again. Deja vu, you know. But I was really lucky because that building had damage on



top of me. Everything around me was destroyed.

The fire truck in front of me was destroyed.

Everything. I had to touch myself to see if I was alive.

Then I ran right back, because there wasn't much too run, and that's when you hear on the radio EMS people down, fire down. I ran there, and then I ran back over here, because I think they started another triage point around here somewhere, triage center. I ran back in there.

Then they said there was a lot of people trapped inside. That's when I right back in, after both buildings collapsed. There were several firefighters down there and battalion chiefs. I didn't know they were battalion chiefs, but they were when we pulled them out.

Q. So after the second building collapsed, you ended up over here by Trinity Street?

A. I was over here, right, and then I ran back over here somewhere. Because after the first collapse they pretty much set another triage center around here somewhere. I'm not too sure if it's over here. Then when the second

building collapsed, I couldn't run far because it was right there. Then once everything settled I ran right back to the triage area.

Q. And the triage was, you think --

A. Somewhere, right.

Q. -- somewhere by Trinity, about midway through the --

A. Right, I'm not too -- right.

Then that's when we found out -- basically I was looking for my partner. I couldn't find my partner. When I went back in there, he was there. He needed some oxygen because he had stuff all over his face. Then that's when the radio call came in that we had EMS and fire trapped. I ran back in here, somewhere over there.

There was just no one around. It was very, very bad. You couldn't breathe too good. That's when I saw several firefighters who were out. So we pulled out about three firefighters that were covered in rubble.

Q. What happened to them; do you know?

A. One guy -- I can't forget him because he was pretty heavy. I'll probably get in

trouble. He weighed 400 pounds. The worst part about this, when this building collapsed, it was very difficult to walk through all this.

Q. When the south tower came down?

A. The south tower, right. So when this building collapsed, pretty much everything here you couldn't recognize it anymore. So it took a while before you could actually walk from this point here all the way back here. This is where we had several trapped firefighters here.

Q. Over by --

A. Firefighters, right. There were lots of firefighters here. There was --

Q. By the customs building?

A. Right, but more -- right, right. Right around in between and Five World Trade Center. This tower here, you saw about 20 ESU guys on the second floor. Don't ask me how they got there. They were climbing down. So it looks like they were there when it collapsed. There was a ladder here. They were repelling down.

I was shocked because I tried to figure out how they made it, because they went from I think second or third floor and they were

repelling.

Q. This is where you ended up staying the rest of the day?

A. No, this is crazy. You couldn't stay here, because you had -- everything was destroyed pretty much around here. Again, don't ask me why I went back in. It was really bad. I pretty much went back to this original spot here at Church and Trinity, I think. Then they directed us somewhere else around here.

Q. Who directed you? A supervisor?

A. Right, some supervisor.

Q. Do you know where you ended up?

A. By the water somewhere around here.

Q. By Battery Park?

A. Right, somewhere around here somewhere.

Then they said that there was a gas leak and that was too dangerous, so we walked from -- we were here somewhere. Then they took us all the way to -- not Chambers. What's that place on the west side. Pier 94.

Q. That's where you ended up after all that stuff?

A. After all that.

Q. So you ended up at Pier 94.

A. Right.

Q. I forgot what I was going to ask you.

What happened to your vehicle?

A. We moved the vehicle. It had several holes. We had no idea it had several holes.

Q. So it ended up staying there and got damaged?

A. Staying there and then moving it, right. Basically every time it would collapse, my partner would go in the vehicle and move it. So that's why our vehicle was the only one pretty much that made it. There was another vehicle I think too.

One of the news channels -- I saw I think it was the south building somebody with a camera running out of the south tower building. You actually could see my vehicle right in front of the tower, right in front. But that's before the second collapse -- the second airplane hit. So we pretty much moved everything.

Q. You said at the end of the day you and your partner were together with your vehicle?

A. Yes. We picked up another ALS unit who

lost their vehicle. So we had two ALS unit in one vehicle. We went to triage at that point at Pier 95 I think.

Q. Anything else you want to add to this?

A. I'm looking at the times here. It felt more like five minutes, the whole thing.

Q. That's the kind of stuff I want you to say, how you perceived everything.

A. Like I say, once I saw the second plane, then I knew, that's it. It wasn't by accident. Then I started thinking about the World Trade Center, how everyone lined up, the ambulances and the fire trucks and I thought, the terrorists know exactly how we lined up last time, and we're doing it again. We pretty much did, line up exactly the same way as the last time. That was my wording.

At that point honestly there was no one to rescue at the two buildings. The worst part was when a surgeon came up to me as we were traveling and he's like, "Guys, listen, medics, we've got four surgeons, 18 doctors, and they were setting up a triage point." I told him that's nice but I don't think anyone's going to

come.

Because I was one of the few units that came out of there, and when we saw what happened -- that's why I left, because basically there was no one alive. We just pulled out several firefighters and that's it. We went back. There was nothing else to do. We were crazy to stay there, because you still had this thing about airplanes going to hit other buildings, and the other buildings around you weren't safe, because the building I was hiding next to, that one was leaning and I heard that one collapsed too.

It was bad. That's pretty much it.

Q. All right. You have nothing else you want to add; right?

A. No. I hope you can understand what I say because I talk kind of fast.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes the interview with paramedic --

PARAMEDIC RIVERA: Daniel Rivera.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: -- Daniel Rivera.

The time now is 1539 hours.

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**EMT-P ANDRE CHERRINGTON**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**A. CHERRINGTON**



**A. CHERRINGTON**

**CHRISTINE BASTEDENBECK:** Today's date is October 10, 2001. The time is 1712 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck, I work with the New York City Fire Department. Today I'm conducting an interview with the following individual,

**ANDRE CHERRINGTON:** Paramedic Andre Cherrington, from battalion 31, unit 31 Victor, tour 2

**Q:** Okay, I'm just gonna ask you to tell me about the events of the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001

**A:** Okay.

**Q:** In your words.

**A:** Alright, what happened was, I logged on. I started work at 8:30, and I was working with a gentleman who was doing overtime, so we were on our way to get some breakfast, and we looked to our left as we were pulling out of the garage, and we saw like a blast. But it didn't seem like anything major. But then we saw the World Trade Center like, catch on fire. So I turned on 1010 W.I.N.S. to see if there was any news and they said that a plane hit. So we were thinking maybe a small plane ran out of gas and hit the building. So we were like okay, let's call the dispatcher. The dispatcher had already started sending units. So we said well listen, 31 Victor, we are able to go. Can you send us? So they sent us over there. So we went on the Brooklyn Bridge, I was driving, we went on the Brooklyn bridge and I'm seeing people already coming across. So we got across over there, I'd say by city hall park and I saw a Lieutenant, Brynes from Battalion 57. And I was talking to him, he stopped us and people were coming to the ambulance. Nothing major, just people with minor cuts and scrapes. He had another unit there, so we triaged a couple of patients, then I requested to go more towards where it seemed more people would be hurt. I said to the Lieutenant, well I'm a paramedic, they probably might need me more in there. So he released us, said okay, find someone closer to the area, another lieutenant. So we went down Broadway, and as I'm driving down Broadway, everyone's stopping the ambulance and coming up to us and saying so-and-so is hurt, and so-and-so is having a heart attack. So we stopped by each patient and pulled out the triage tags. Everyone was

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basically a green tag, so we just kept triaging people en route to the World Trade Center. When we got there, we got there, I guess 9:00, 9:05, whatever, and I seen Phil Ashby there and he was doing triage from inside the building. We started triaging right away. I was taking care of a patient who was having a hard time breathing and my Partner was taking care of another patient. That patient jumped on, Metropolitan actually took that patient to the hospital. While Metropolitan took that person to the hospital, somebody came to my partner and said we have another person who's burnt up in the building.

**Q:** At this point, had the second plane crashed into the second building?

**A:** In all honesty, everything happened so fast, and it was so hectic that I wasn't really paying attention to it. It seemed like, you know, all the ashes were falling, it was just a big mess. Everybody was screaming, so I don't really know. I just know what was going on as far as me and my partner were concerned. So, when we went to the second building, I think it was the second building, and we seen a guy burnt up, downstairs in the lobby. So we carried him, and we brought him on our stretcher, it was parked by the ambulance. We put him in the stretcher, while we're taking care of him we're seeing everybody running out of the second building and it was just like everybody running, everybody trying to just get outta there. So it's like, okay, fine, we're taking care of this guy. We had to just cool down his wounds. He was burnt up, he had like 90% burns over his body. Like first, second degree burns. A couple third degree burns also. So we took care of him, got an IV in him, and were ready to transport him. The Lieutenant on the scene said don't take him yet cause there's more patients coming down. I waited for a few minutes, maybe five minutes. And it was like a cluster, so -- I just decided, you know, let me take this guy, cause he started having shortness of breath. I couldn't call for anything to stabilize him, cause there was a mess there, you know, before I intubated him. So I said, let me take him to the hospital. So as I was pulling off, I'd say about half a block away, we heard a big boom, and we seen a whole bunch of ashes, everything just started coming towards us. So I actually stopped the ambulance for thirty seconds and I looked. My partner was in the back he said stop the ambulance. So I stopped and I looked, and I

**A. CHERRINGTON**

seen all the debris coming. So I said close the bus. Cause at this point everyone started running towards the ambulance, I mean, you know, we had one critical patient there, so I said let me just get this guy to the hospital. So he closed the ambulance. And as I'm driving, people are running and debris is coming down. Debris is coming down and hitting the bus. I'm just driving, driving, I drove up a one-way, I think it was Second Avenue. One of those major avenues. And I drove halfway up to Cornell, and then I got on the right way, and I drove the rest of the way up to Cornell. When we got to Cornell, I think I gave a notification, when I got to Cornell, they immediately took the patient in and they intubated the patient. As I was leaving they said the second building fell. When the second building fell, I said well, we gotta get back there. So we went back there, where they told us to go to Battery Park triage. So we went to Battery Park. When we went there now, they said that there was a gas leak. So I had the ambulance parked, and I was actually on the other side of the street, they said that there's a gas leak, get outta there. I didn't have enough time to jump into the ambulance, so I just started going towards--with the crowd, running more or less until there was a bus that me and my partner jumped in and we went to Pier 94. When we got to Pier 94, it seemed like it was a false alarm.

**Q:** Do you know whos vehicle it was you jumped into?

**A:** My partner knew who it was, but I think they were from Manhattan. I'd never seen the guy before.

**Q:** Was it a Fire Department vehicle?

**A:** It was EMS, yeah, EMS vehicle.

**Q:** Who was your partner that day?

**A:** Suarez, he's a new paramedic. And we jumped in that ambulance, and whoever the guy was drove all the way to Pier 94. All three of us were in the front. When we got there, we found out that it was more or less a false alarm, so I walked back towards my vehicle, but they wouldn't let us over there. By the time I got over there the vehicle was already gone. So I said, oh well, you know. So I jumped in with 31 Young, who is Paramedic Smiley and Paramedic Rivera. And basically I stayed with them all day, and

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what we did is we went back towards City Hall Park to see if anyone was needing triage, if anybody needed us. But by then they already had a major triage center set up, so nobody needed us. We were trying to go where we were needed. Cause you know, we didn't really have anybody really telling us what to do over the airway so, we finally wound up on the backside of BMCC where we set up a triage center, us and a couple BLS. Finally some lieutenants came over and they said okay, you guys stay over here, just in case, cause one of the buildings was on fire. The last building to fall was on fire. He said it might drop. So we waited there to see if anything was going to happen. The only thing that happened was that the building dropped. We waited to see if anybody was hurt, but everybody seemed to be evacuated, everything was fine. So from there, we stayed there for a few hours. You know, just triaging, waiting. And after that, it seemed like it was okay. So another lieutenant came there and said well, they might need some paramedics at Ground Zero. They were saying something about there were amputated patients there who, once they get them out of the rubble, they're gonna need us to start lines, whatever and get them to the nearest hospital. So we went back to Ground Zero. There we reported to another Lieutenant who I really, I really didn't keep any names. But I know that it was really hectic over there. So we reported there, all four paramedics, and we were like, okay, we're here and we're ready to help if anybody needs any help from us. And we basically just stood there, and what we did there was, if anybody got cut...it was minor triage more or less. The seemed to have everything under control there. So basically, we just stayed there waiting, just on stand-by. We pulled our ambulance into their little bay, into their bay, and we just waited there. But around 2:30, you know, I realized there's nothing we can really do here. There's nothing going on here, it was more like a BLS thing, you know, minor cuts, abrasions, whatever. By then, my partner already worked over 30 hours so he was really tired. So I talked to the lieutenant, I said, you know, we're really not needed here. I've been here since 8:30 this morning, you know, can you release us? So basically...

**Q:** This is 2:30 in the morning?

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A: 2:30 in the morning, yeah. So basically after that, we seen that there's nothing that we could do, so he released us and we came back to Brooklyn. That was it. So you know, that day I thank my lucky stars. Cause you know, I think that if I would have actually waited around for more patients, I think instead of seeing the rubble coming towards me and I'm booking, I think the rubble would've actually hit the bus with the guy in there. I think it would have been a very bad situation. So for some reason I said, you know, I'm not staying, I'm leaving. It was kind of like a free-for-all, because, you know, what happened was, when we got there, we thought everything was okay, everything is calm. Maybe the little plane hit and it's causing all this. But I guess when the second plane hit, that's when all hell broke loose. And that's when everybody realized, you know, nothing's calm. Everything just went crazy after that. I mean, I did what I had to do, I took one patient, we took care of it and got him to the hospital. And you know, I did say, well I saved one person. I know I did save one person, and that's all that matters. I was there for X Amount of hours and I did one good thing. And my partner too.

Q: Everything you did was good.

A: Well, yeah. I mean, you know, everything I did was good. But I feel good that I did get that guy to the hospital. As a matter of fact, I looked at the ACR and the guy lived not far from where I lived. So I think that two days later I went over to the address and I thought his wife was there, but it was his mother. And his mother happens to be a nurse at Methodist Hospital. I approached here. Because I heard on the news that they said, well we don't know what's going on. A lot of family members, they don't know what's going on with the people in the building. So I said, let me go over there and let her know where her son is, where her husband is (I thought it was his wife.) When I got there, it was the mother. I told her, this is where your son is, this is the condition that he was in. And she was very happy about it, you know she was real happy. And I felt good too, you know, I felt good. Everything worked out. He was pretty bad though, he was real bad. But you know, I never really contacted them again. Maybe one day when everything calms down, hopefully I'll hear that he's still alive and that he's coming out of the hospital, you

**A. CHERRINGTON**

know? But it was a situation, and at the time, you know, you're not really thinking about it, you know you're just like okay, let me just do what I have to do. And you know, I'm pretty much like, I was in the Army, so I pretty much know how to keep my cool. And the triage also helped a lot. Cause I think if I didn't know that, I probably would have had everybody on my bus. Because everybody had the M.I. or seizures, but it was just, everyone was in shock. They couldn't believe it, you know? So it's like, let me just triage this one, triage, this one, you have an M.I.? Have you had a history before? You take any medicine? No, okay, you get a green tag. And that's all it was. But as we started getting more towards it, it started getting more serious. Then when we got that guy, that guy saved my life too. That's the main thing I tell everybody. I might have saved his life, but he definitely saved me and my partners' life. That's what me and my partner say. It was just a blessing, you know? You know, that's it. That's all I got to say. Yeah, that's it.

A: This concludes my interview with Paramedic Andre Cherrington. The time now is 1725 hours.

**File No. 9110037**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**EMT JUAN RIOS**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**JUAN RIOS**

**CHRISTINE BASTEDENBECK:** Today is October 10, 2001. The time is 1430 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview at Battalion 31, EMS with the following individual...

**JUAN RIOS:** EMT Juan Rios.

**Q:** Please state your rank and where you're assigned.

**A:** EMT, I'm assigned to Battalion 31, Unit 31 David, tour two.

**Q:** Okay, Mr. Rios, just give us your account of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

You were working that day?

**A:** Yeah, I was working with my partner, David Blackburn. We drove up, you know, every morning we go under the Brooklyn bridge and we, you know, we read our newspaper. In front of us, there was a medic unit from Long Island College, so, you know, they look and they saw a plane going into the World Trade Center. On the north side I think it was. Then they make a U-turn, they tell me and my partner, you know, a plane just went inside the World Trade Center, come on, let's go. So we were on the radio, and we're telling them, you know, we're going over there. So we went, we went on the Brooklyn Bridge. We saw, you know, the fire, smoke and everywhere people screaming. So we park on the South Side, on Liberty.

**Q:** You parked your vehicle at...?

**A:** At Liberty.

**Q:** Liberty and what intersection?

**A:** I think it was West End and Washington.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** And then, when the second plane hit, debris started to fall down, so...

**Q:** Okay, when you got there and stopped at Washington and Liberty, what was happening around you?

**A:** People screaming, people just, it was total chaos. People were screaming, debris was falling, I looked up and I saw people just throwing themselves out of the



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buildings. They were landing on roofs. I heard they were landing on people, and it was just total chaos.

**Q:** Okay, did you, when you got there, did you report to any supervisor or...?

**A:** There was a Lieutenant, but I didn't...it was total chaos that everyone was just almost doing their own thing. But, I just saw one Lieutenant there.

**Q:** Okay, did he approach you, or did you approach him?

**A:** He approached us and we had a patient in back, and um...

**Q:** Where did you get the patient from?

**A:** She ran into us. She was having like, an anxiety attack.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** So we gave her, you know, oxygen and shit.

**Q:** That was from the World Trade Center?

**A:** Yeah. So she, she just calmed down. She was on the bus, in the ambulance. Then when the second plane hit, the Lieutenant told us to go to Washington and Albany, which is around the corner. We parked with at least 20 ambulances. So we just went there, we were waiting for people to come so we could take them to the hospital, but nobody was coming.

**Q:** Okay, what happened to the original patient that you had?

**A:** When the second one hit, you know, we heard like a loud explosion and debris was coming down. Everyone was like get out, get out and she got scared, she ran out of the bus, and I don't know where she went. We moved the bus, and they told us to park them in two lines, at least ten ambulances in each line. I was in the back waiting, you know, so we could wait for patients and I was hooking up the regulator to the O-2, when I hear people screaming and a loud explosion, and I heard like "sssssssss..." the dust like "sssssssss..." So I come out of the bus, and I look and I see a big cloud of dust and debris coming from the glass... through the condominium, the other building, and like, glass falling. So I just started to run, everybody ran, so I just ran. Our bus, it got totaled.

**JUAN RIOS**

Yeah, like broken windows, the back was full with debris and dust, other peoples' equipment, they wouldn't even know. So, I just ran to Battery Park with everybody. It was me, my partner, and another voluntary medic, and three or two cops.

**Q:** Do you know any of their names?

**A:** No, I don't know any of their names.

**Q:** Just, the only person you knew was your partner?

**A:** Yeah. So, we just ran, ran as far...you know, when the second one...we heard it, and more dust came. Not debris, just smoke. All we heard was "Ssssssss..." like a "Sssss" sound. We ran, we ran at least a mile away from the ferry. But there was two chiefs, I don't know their names?

**Q:** Were they EMS chiefs?

**A:** EMS chiefs.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** Out of nowhere I seen an ambulance coming. A guy driving with two people in the back. The chief got on the radio asking for boats to come so we could take the people to Jersey City. Whoever had to be treated we treated on the ambulance. Another, I think it was like a, not an ambulance, but another like, van with supplies came over. They brought you know, oxygen, and a whole bunch of stuff.

**Q:** Okay, was that a fire department vehicle?

**A:** Yeah, a fire department vehicle.

**Q:** Was it in like an LSU or something?

**A:** No, just EMS.

**Q:** Okay, you don't know? Just a van with all kinds of equipment?

**A:** Yeah, right, it came with a Lieutenant. Like two Lieutenants and...

**Q:** And where was that?

**JUAN RIOS**

**A:** Battery Park. You know, we treated many people just with asthma. We gave them Albuterol, and we just put them on the boat to Jersey City. After we cleared that up, they had another sector in the ferry, there were a whole bunch of people there.

**Q:** So basically you ended up at like a triage area in Battery Park?

**A:** We made our own triage area in Battery Park. After we finished everything, we went to the ferry.

**Q:** Okay, did you sustain any injuries that day?

**A:** No, no.

**Q:** Other than being totally covered in...

**A:** Covered with um, dirt and...

**Q:** Okay, you don't have asthma or anything?

**A:** No, I don't have asthma.

**Q:** Okay, so you ended up treating patients and...?

**A:** There were a whole bunch of people who had, you know, the carts. They had water, ice cream, so they were generous enough to give us, they offered that we could take whatever we wanted to take. There were giving people water, soda, ice cream, pretzels, potato chips. They said, whatever you need just take from here.

**Q:** At any time did you get separated from your partner?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Okay, anything else you want to add to your story?

**A:** It was...I'm never gonna forget the experience, you know? I still think about it, cause I went back on Friday to do overtime.

**Q:** This past Friday?

**A:** Yeah, and I was in the same spot I was in when it happened. I saw the windows of the condominium, they were all damaged, you know. Say I just stood there, you never know what could have happened. You know I could just, you know, I could've died. So it just, it brought a lot of memories back, you know? You know, just the bus, in

**JUAN RIOS**

the back got totaled, other people's equipment in there covered with dust and all the broken glass. Cause I was debating should I stay in the back or just run? I saw everybody run, so I ran. I just started. You know, I started at the academy in December of 2000, I just came into the field in February. To have eight months on the job and to see this...

**Q:** Yeah, something that you never want to see again, I'm sure. Okay Juan, thank you very much. This concludes the interview with EMT Juan Rios, the time now is 1439 hours.

**File No. 9110038**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**EMT DANIEL WHITMAN**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**D. WHITMAN**

**PAUL RADENBERG:** The time is 1441 hours, and this is Paul Radenberg with the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with...

**DANIEL WHITMAN:** Dan Whitman, Battalion 31, shield number 5300, EMS FDNY.

**Q:** Okay, Mr. Whitman is an Emergency Medical Technician. We are conducting this interview regarding the events of September 11,2001 at EMS Battalion 51.

**A:** 31.

**Q:** Correction, 31. Okay, start basically, with, you know, making your way down to the Trade Center. You were off duty?

**A:** I was off duty, I made my way down to Ground Zero. I was directed by Police Officers and Traffic Officers to stop by the Battalion station, cause they wouldn't let me walk all the way down to Ground Zero originally. And I was down at the battalion station, I think it was on Warren Street. One of those cross streets by Ground Zero. They just had a plethora of people there. People from all over the Eastern Seaboard. They had medics from Connecticut and tons of people down there, there was lots of people there. I was directed to go to South Ferry. There at South Ferry, it had even more people with very little patience. I was down there for a significant amount of time. Then I was directed down to Ground Zero to treat people. There were firefighters right on site with saline and Visene for our eyes. And, I don't know, I spent about 15 hours there.

**D. WHITMAN**

**Q: Okay, the first station that you stopped at, that was a temporary aid station?**

**A: Yes.**

**Q: When you were on your way down there, and that was somewhere around Warren Street, right?**

**A: Warren Street, right. Warren Street if I recall.**

**Q: Okay, do you remember who sent you from Warren Street to South Ferry?**

**A: I couldn't tell you, all I know is that they outranked me.**

**Q: Was it a fire officer, EMS?**

**A: It was EMS. He was wearing a blue jacket, it looked like an EMS coat. So I guess it was EMS.**

**Q: Okay, and then, when you got down to South Ferry, who sent you up from South Ferry?**

**A: It's not that I was sent up, I couldn't go home anyway, so I got released there, and that's where I spent the majority of my time, at South Ferry. I signed off that I was leaving. I was going through, I got to Ground Zero, and there I was directed to treat the patients with Visene and saline, just to clear their eyes, the firefighters.**

**Q: Who gave you that direction? Do you remember?**

**A: Um, I think it was a doctor down there. There was a doctor down there,**

#### D. WHITMAN

cause the firefighters were just coming up with the same thing, stuff in their eyes. So they just said we should have people down there, I talked to the medics down there, the army guys, I went down with them. The chief medical officer on scene told us all to go back. I don't know who he was. He was in a firefighter outfit. So after that I was on about my 15<sup>th</sup> hour, I was getting tired. I walked all the way down from the Bronx to get there. That's about when I went home.

Q: Do you remember seeing any EMS personnel that you recognized that had come in from home in civilian clothes, rather than in uniform?

A: None that I can recall like that. The only one that I did see was Gary Smiley, that I know by name and face. He had a bunch of people in his ambulance with him who I could tell you who they were by face, but by name I couldn't really help you out. But Gary Smiley's the one I really know by name and face.

Q: Okay, did, while you were down there, what point in the job do you remember getting down there? Were you down there between the plane impact and the towers coming down?

A: As the tower was coming down, the second tower.

Q: As the second tower came down?

A: Yes, that's when I got down there.

Q: Do you remember where you were down there when the second tower came down?



**D. WHITMAN**

**A:** I was a couple of blocks away. I was close enough for the cloud of smoke to come over me, but, I didn't really feel the direct debris. So three blocks maybe.

**Q:** So, still north of the trade center?

**A:** I think so.

**Q:** Okay, and, you did say before when we were talking that you made your way down with a marine?

**A:** Yes. From... there was an armory. And I heard over 1010 WINS that all military personnel report to the nearest armory. I'm in the military, so I went over there. And when I got there, that's when the second plane hit. I was released from there because it was a National Guard Unit, and I'm a Reserve Unit. So the Marine and I, we know each other, we decided to go down to Ground Zero, make our way down there.

**Q:** You don't remember his name by chance?

**A:** Uh, no. I can tell you what he looks like. Hahaha.

**Q:** Okay, in your travel from the first aid station up on Warren Street, down to South Ferry, how did you make that trip? That was on foot or...?

**A:** On foot, yeah.

**Q:** It was walking?

**A:** Yeah, actually walking, and maybe 3 or 4 blocks we got picked up by Long Island College, they have this ambulance they call the "Beast." It's just a really big ambulance and awkward looking. They picked us up for a couple

**D. WHITMAN**

**blocks. Me, the Marine, a doctor, and 2 nurses. They picked us all up, cause we were all travelling down together. Then they took them down to South Ferry, and we got dropped off at the aid station on Warren. Around that area. So it's about two or three blocks.**

**Q: Okay, so really other than Gary Smiley, no other EMS names that you recognize?**

**A: The faces I recognize, not the names**

**Q: Okay, any other thoughts or impressions on the job? Anything that makes it stand out?**

**A: Well, an event that kind of stands out, it was weird to me for the Chief Medical Officer to tell me and the other people treating the firefighters on site when they were just walking up to get their eyes washed out, it's just a simple saline solution to wash their eyes out to continue working, for them to get sent all the way up there when you could have people on site. I don't know, he was under a lot of stress, I'm not knocking what he did, but that didn't make sense to me. It was a little chaotic, but we weren't prepared for a situation like this, there's nothing you can really say, but that would be my only thing.**

**Q: Okay, just to clarify it a little bit, you were at the Warren Street station when the second tower came down?**

**A: No, I was on my way to Warren Street.**

**D. WHITMAN**

**Q:** You were on your way? Still on your way?

**A:** Yeah, I was only a few blocks away and the smoke cloud came through. First I saw people running, and then I saw the cloud behind them. And that's when I started running.

**Q:** Everybody was running...

**A:** But it was, I don't know....oh, another thing that I found odd about this, it's a sad comparison...but it was like a video game. Cause every once in a while you'd walk a couple blocks, and on the corner, covered in debris and soot, if you didn't walk into it, there was supplies. Like you know, there was supplies, different stations, different areas, just sitting there. No one knew what they were. Like, pallets of water, but nobody knew they were there. You know? Nobody knew. You had to like, kick off the dirt, or pick up stuff. That's the only thing I found weird, that was kind of weird. Other than that, that's it I guess.

**A:** Okay, the time is now 1450 hours, interview is concluded.

**File No. 9110039**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**PARAMEDIC GARY SMILEY**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason**

G. SMILEY

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 10. The time is 1435 hours. My name is Mike Tambasco. I'm an investigator assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 31, conducting an interview with Paramedic Gary Smiley into the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center.

Q. Gary, do me a favor. Give me your name, rank and the unit that you were on and then feel free.

A. Gary Smiley, Paramedic, Battalion 31. That day I was working 31 Young Tour 2, 7 o'clock to 3:00. I heard the initial reports over the radio and we were assigned to the job. We were at Engine 207 at the time getting gas on over on Tillary Street. We started to respond. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge. From the Brooklyn Bridge you could already see the tower burning. It hit you in your mind that this was going to be bad.

We initially responded in to lower Manhattan and ended up responding to Church Street in front of 5 World Trade Center. The only reason I think that is because in 1993 when I responded to that bombing, that's where the initial staging was.

When we pulled up there were two other

G. SMILEY

ambulances there that arrived simultaneously. I took command of those two and informed them to set up triage area across the street on the far side of Church, which from the map would be by St. Pauls cemetery. We got our equipment out. I started to give them direction. The helmets, coats and to get their equipment out. My partner Danny Rivera proceeded on the sidewalk towards the front of 5 World Trade Center because there were people coming out of the building that were hurt and they seemed to be milling around the front doors, so he was giving them instructions to get out of the building and to come off of the plaza and come across Church Street.

Several people came out and they stumbled. He grabbed a couple. As I was coming across the street, across Church Street, is when the second plane hit the south tower, at that point we ran across the street going towards St. Pauls and there was a fire engine on the corner of that corner of Vesey. We hid behind the fire engine and we got hit with a lot of debris.

It took I don't know how long for that to stop. I know it was hot because we all were -- I remember Danny looking at me and saying you are like

G. SMILEY

red as a beet, because we probably got flash burns from the fireball.

At that point there was everybody was running around crazy. A lot of people were coming up to us screaming and I didn't see that many people injured at that time. There was a lot of bodies, bodies came out of the sky at that point. In fact we were hit with debris, which turned out to be human remains.

I remember a gentleman coming up to us with a leg screaming to help him. It wasn't his leg. It was somebody else's leg. We got back in the vehicles and we moved them up Vesey going towards Broadway. I pulled up on the sidewalk. There was like a Cabrini unit there and another EMS unit.

At that point we started to get a lot of hysterical people, a lot of patients. I remember one patient going by us that was already dead that they had on the scoop, that the EMTs had stopped us and asked us and we had said that they were already dead. The guy was basically decapitated.

At that point I made a decision. I told Danny I said, I think the best bet would be to go to West and Vesey, because that's where -- that was the main staging area or the last one. So we thought that

G. SMILEY

would be a good idea, so we took the two units that were with us and came around Broadway down Vesey past 5 and 6.

There was a lot of debris in the street.

There was a lot of burning debris in the street. I didn't see many people at that point. There wasn't anybody to stop and help. There was just a lot of emergency vehicles apparently coming down that way. We ended up -- we pulled into Vesey and West. There seemed to be a lot of fire engines already staged there. We met up with Captain Pincus and Chief Goldfarb.

We parked the truck. We were the second vehicle in off of West and Vesey. There was a Citywide ambulance that was the first one, catty corner to the second. Equipment was taken out and they had staged us in the front of 3 World Financial Center on the upper steps of it. There was other units on the lower steps, which was directly in front of 6 and off at the angle of the north tower.

At that point a lot of people were just standing around, I remember Manny Delgado was there, Dr. Cherson, a number of volunteers came up to us asking if they could help. About six or seven EMTs.



G. SMILEY

They told me to start taking down names and numbers so I started taking down their names and their EMT numbers just to keep track of them. At that point nobody knew what was going on.

There was about -- I think there was 3 ALS units and 7 BLS units. Captain Pincus asked for a BLS and ALS unit that he could designate as fast units to go into the lobby. Me and Danny volunteered. Another BLS crew volunteered. They were just waiting for a final preparation to know when we were going to make it across the street.

At that point, I met up with a couple of other guys from our Battalion who also came down to stage there. EMT Felton, Sean Cunniffe. I remember Felton because we started to notice people coming off the building, coming off the north tower and at first we didn't know what was going on, and then you could see that they were jumping. In fact I had to actually hold Felton because he wanted to run across the street and catch them. He wanted -- he was hysterical and he just wanted to catch them. I told him that he couldn't do that. They were hitting the ground, of course, exploding. It was horrible. We must have -- we probably saw about a dozen people jump.

At that point they took everybody's -- several people coming around taking everybody's name and badge numbers and what units they were, so they knew who was there. There were a slew of vehicles coming in that had already arrived on West Street, private ambulances, our units, proprietary units.

Then we went back. We had gone down to the bottom steps and they went back up the top steps. We were standing by the stretcher. In fact, I think because they were getting ready to send me and Danny in to the forward triage area when the first tower, which would be the south tower, somebody yelled it was collapsing.

We ran up the steps and into the AMEX building, which would be 3 World Financial Center. All the equipment was left, we just dropped everything and we ran. Debris came down, but from that tower, the lobby held, at least the windows held. We were covered with debris but we were in the lobby. Then we heard pounding on the glass for some of the guys that didn't make it in the lobby, so we broke out the windows to the front of 3, American Express building. We got those guys into the lobby.

Chief Carrasquillo was there too. He ended

G. SMILEY

up -- he started taking a head count and he told me to take a head count. There was a lot of people running around that had really -- they were losing it. It was very understandable.

I grabbed as much equipment as I could from the outside and a couple of the other guys and we set up in the back part of the lobby, BLS on one side and ALS on the other side, figuring that we would be getting a lot of patients. The air was not too bad in there, and that's what we basically did. We figured we would get a large influx of people coming in at that point. Nobody started coming in.

At that point Chief Goldfarb said that he smelled gas. Nobody smelled gas except Chief Goldfarb. Chief Goldfarb smelling gas saved about 40 people, because we moved through the back lobby and out the side entrance on to the farther end of Vesey Street going towards North End Avenue.

That's when we started to hear the radio transmissions of Maydays. On our radios we heard EMS Mayday. I knew over Chief Carrasquillo's radio I was hearing FD Maydays. This went on for 5 minutes straight. We heard the units calling, we heard our units, we heard 1 Mary, 6 Mary, 6 Adam.

G. SMILEY

We asked Captain Pincus about after 5 minutes, we said what are we going to do here. He said I can't force you to go. We said well, we want to go. So me, Danny and another medic who works for us but he was working for New York Hospital that day. I don't know his last name. He works at New York, Carlos.

Q. Do you remember, his first name is Carlos?

A. Yes. He said if you want to go find these guys, we can. It didn't seem like at that point there was really, besides our group, there was nobody else there, at least that was alive. So we took trauma bags and started off and our scoop stretchers off and started off walking back down Vesey and we made the turn on to West Street. We passed the building with the 3, American Express building.

I remember seeing in front of the collapse unit for Rescue 3 there were 3 Battalion Chiefs that were there and I asked the Battalion Chief, did you see any of the guys. I said we can't see anybody. We don't know where they are calling for help for. That was the only firemen I saw. I didn't see anybody else. I don't know how far down, we didn't get too much farther down West Street luckily.

Q. Going south?

G. SMILEY

A. South, going towards the north pedestrian bridge, when you heard a rumble. That's when you looked up and you saw the second tower coming down. There was no communication at that point. It was -- I just remember turning and running. I know Danny, we eventually found out where everybody ran to, the 3 of us. But I never saw the two other Battalion Chiefs again. I know my partner ended up dragging the one that was alive out.

I ended up running back up the steps towards 3. I made it right to the corner and got knocked down by the blast. I guess it was the gush of wind. I got hit in the back with some cement and I had just made it around the first ambulance and I dove under my truck, which was vehicle 305. That's what a little voice in my head told me to do. I crawled underneath the ambulance and that's where I was for about the next 15 minutes. I remember a lot of debris hitting the truck and I couldn't breathe and I couldn't see.

I don't know how long that went on for. When it sounded as if the debris stopped, I couldn't -- the sides were already covered as if it had snowed, so I started to dig and I cleared enough away that I could see a glow, which I knew was not -- which was fire,

because there was fires burning around the vehicles. So I decided it was better to get out and try and make it than burn to death.

So I crawled out from under there and you couldn't see still. I just remembered the same side of the truck I came out of, so I figured if I point myself in the direction I will be going away from the towers. So I just started crawling and I got up and I started walking. You still couldn't see. It was as if you had your head in a sack. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't see.

I tried calling for Danny. Every time I took a deep breath it was just worse. At that point I had dropped the lantern I had. The equipment was gone. I wasn't concerned too much about that. I didn't notice at the time that I had injuries to my leg and stuff like that. I just tried -- my only thought at that point was to get out of there.

I ended up walking across Vesey into a construction area that is in between North End Avenue and the West Side Highway. I found a chain link fence that I bumped into that I decided let me follow the fence and see where it goes. At least I can hold on to something. I was going to climb over the fence and

decided just go alongside it. I went alongside the fence for a while. It seemed like forever.

Then I encountered a fireman who was also disoriented. I don't know who he is. I don't remember his name. I don't remember what company. We walked together along the fence. We still couldn't see. We made it around the side of the fence, then we started hearing voices calling, anybody out there. We started -- we just followed the natural turn of the fence and we ended up from what they tell me somewhere near North End Avenue there was a salad bar that was across from 4 Merrill Lynch -- the Merrill Lynch building and there was about seven or eight cops in there, Port Authority guys, a couple of firemen.

The owner and his daughter or his wife, they dragged us in there. Everybody -- the cloud was clearing a little, but there was a lot of fire around there. The parked cars that had been parked there were all on fire and which wasn't on fire was exploding. We didn't know at that point. I know that one of the police officers said that he thought that they were bombs and maybe they rigged them to blow up. Just secondary explosions. We didn't know what to do.

We went towards the back of the restaurant,

G. SMILEY

there was a couple of firemen got in there. One fireman yelling let's get the gas off. So he went into the kitchen area and they killed the gas. They had a couple of hoses that had these big industrial sinks, so we started hosing each other off because the stuff was burning you. I guess it was just because the ash was so hot.

Stayed in there for about 20 minutes. The explosions outside were too much, so we decided to get out of there and we ended up coming out of there and we ended up on North End Avenue. They had set up a field hospital in I don't know what building. They dragged us in there for a while. Then there was a report of a gas leak in there so I decided it would be better if I exit. There were people that were getting treated. They could walk, basically ran out of there. Everybody ran out of there.

It must have been about 50 of us at that point. People started saying let's get some of the vehicles, you know. We had thought at that point that we need something to get out of there. So Emergency Services, I know there was about six or seven ESU cops and they basically told us that they are going to stay in front of us and I don't know what they thought. I



G. SMILEY

think they kind of thought that there were ground troops coming in to kill us next. At least that seemed to be -- they were going to keep us from whatever was coming. It was crazy, people thought that there was -- they were going to bomb everything.

People were running around. FBI people saying that there were bombs in different parks and just running from one area to the next. I remember seeing Captain Rivera there from Manhattan -- from the Bronx. He is now in Queens, who I remember we got to the point where we were actually running out of places to go. We were going to go into the water. I said maybe we should take off our stuff and go into the ocean. We didn't know where else to go.

Because there was, every building was apparently -- the police said there was gas leaks and they said they were going to blow up and we had no place else to go. Somebody actually -- a couple of guys ran back down Vesey and got into some of the vehicles, because mine had pulled up. We had about seven or eight ambulances at that point and a couple of Emergency Services cars.

Basically we didn't do much for a little while. There was not much to do. We were kind of

G. SMILEY

trapped back there. We couldn't get out. I don't remember how we actually got out of there and who directed us to get out of there. We ended up -- I don't know how we ended up -- we ended up on Greenwich Street I guess, like an hour later. About 7 units ended up on Greenwich and Duane and I remember meeting Captain, no, Chief Wells there. He asked me was the Lieutenant with us. I said no, he told me I was a senior guy and he was going to take over that area so we set up on Greenwich Street.

They had about 5 or 6 doctors and they had about 6 ambulances. We spent the better part of I think 6 or 7 hours there doing absolutely nothing until 7 collapsed. We still did nothing because there was no patients. Everybody is still -- there is a lot of trouble breathing. You just kind of ignored it. I knew my leg was bleeding, I had some pretty big cuts on my leg, but I really didn't -- I just bandaged it up. I don't think -- you kind of knew that there was -- you were going to be needed. They said that a lot of people were dead so we didn't even know how many were left.

From there we were asked to respond to the Millennium Hotel later on in the nighttime by

G. SMILEY

Lieutenant Jack Sullivan. One of the volunteers said that they had reports of patients that they found in the Millennium. So we volunteered to go there, so we took the truck around to the Millennium. I remember were driving through the streets, seeing Chief Gombo walking with Russ Terranova and we continued going down towards the Millennium. Ended up not finding anybody at the Millennium.

We brought our trucks around to One Liberty Plaza. We worked there for the next 5 or 6 hours until we were relieved at about 2:00 in the morning. We worked inside that field hospital just taking care of what was coming in.

Throughout the night you couldn't see. You had to wash your eyes out every 5 to 10 minutes. It was pretty blinding. I guess the adrenaline kept going through the whole time, because even at Liberty Plaza there were several times when you just saw the whole block start running. Everybody -- we must have ran up and down that street 5 or 6 times because stuff was coming off the buildings and there were more collapses.

It wasn't till I got released and starting coming back, I guess when we started to like settle

G. SMILEY

down a little bit. By the time I got back to Brooklyn, I couldn't breathe at all. That's when they took me over to Long Island College Hospital. I was admitted for severe respiratory distress, severe smoke inhalation. I had developed (inaudible). They said not so much from being trapped but from the severe dehydration from the dust. I guess from the heat, because it was so hot and you didn't take your turnout coat off and your helmet didn't come off your head, because you were afraid you were going to get hit with something.

I was admitted there and I spent up until Friday in the hospital. I was released. That's about it. I went back down Friday night on my own time to dig with some guys from New York Hospital, because I just felt that I needed to pitch in and see what there was. That about covers the events the way it was.

Q. Gary, unless there is anything else you can think of or want to add to it --

A. Just looking at the questions and stuff, I don't think anybody was intentionally put in any harm's way. There was a lot of volunteers coming up to you, some that I never saw again. I hope to God they didn't get killed, but it seems as if there was a tremendous

G. SMILEY

amount of EMTs that were coming out of nowhere. Not our people, just volunteer EMTs. I don't know what happened to them.

There was no warning when the buildings came down. Even after the first collapse you really didn't even have an inclination that the second tower was going to come down. I don't think anybody was aware. The immediate people that I was with during the collapse, you know, I met up with Danny about half an hour, 45 minutes later. More like an hour later.

Danny had hid in the corner of the AMEX building and wedged himself in by one of the window ledges and he flattened himself out and he found some stretchers and put them on top of himself. That's what cushioned the debris from killing him.

That was it. I know the other medic that was with us got out as well. He ended up running into the lobby and continued in the lobby, because the lobby was crushed. That's what I said before about Goldfarb and the smell of gas. Because from what I have seen of the building, we wouldn't fare too well staying in that lobby. We probably would have all been crushed.

I didn't see anybody that was missing, that are still missing. I guess that about covers it for

now. I'm sure if you ask me tomorrow I would have about 500 more things to say. I'm sure you don't want to have a dissertation on my state of mind. I won't give it to you.

Q. All right, if there is anything else that you want to add later on, that's not a problem. We will get it in there.

A. You know, it was just the thing that struck us as strange when we first pulled up was the small amount of people that were coming out of the building. Remember in '93 when we pulled up into the same spot there was a thousand people coming out of that building. When we pulled out there was maybe 100. They were milling in the lobby. I remember we had to scream at them to get out of the lobby and to come across the street.

There were a lot of people who finally listened to us. Thank God, because I'm sure they are still alive today because of that. That was one of the things that really stood out. Where are they? Then of course, after the first one collapsed, it was basically nobody was around. You know, I think everybody you know that was in my immediate group, everybody really stuck together and I got to give them a lot of credit.

G. SMILEY

I give Goldfarb, Carrasquillo, and Jace Pincus, Captain Pincus, a lot of credit. They kept their heads pretty well. Nothing on their part endangered us at all. Everything that we did we volunteered to do.

I'm sure they were -- you know, they were acting in good faith. Timing was very good for them. It was basically the only thing that stood in the way of us getting killed. Just a couple of minutes.

So that was about it.

MR. TAMBASCO: I thank you. The interview is concluding at 1503 hours. Thanks again.

**File No. 9110040**

**WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW**

**EMT ALAN COOKE**

**Interview Date: October 10, 2001**

**Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason**



A. COOKE

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 10, 2001. My name is Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview of the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center. We are interviewing EMT Alan Cooke of Battalion 31 of the EMS. The starting time for this interview is 1737 hours.

Q. Mr. Cooke, I will just ask you to give me your rank and your assignment on that day and feel free to go right ahead.

A. My name is Alan Cooke, EMT D. I was working 32 Adam Tour 2. Initially what I remember or how it started is when I first came into work I saw the smoke when I was walking into the station. I really didn't pay any mind as to what it may have been. Somebody told me a plane crashed into the World Trade Center, so I thought it was a small engine plane. When I get to the parking lot and I saw the first tower burning.

Then while I was standing in the parking lot, that's when I saw the plane crash into the second tower. So my partner and I, Victor Camile, we got our equipment together, got the bus checked out and we were assigned to 333 Rector Street for an asthmatic. That's how we ended up going into Manhattan.

A. COOKE

Went into Manhattan. We encountered heavy traffic, which really delayed our response time getting to Rector Street.

Q. How did you go, over the bridge?

A. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge, which was closed off at that time. We got flagged down by a fire Lieutenant so that he could get over the bridge with us. We stopped. He got on. We took him over the bridge. We dropped him off at the foot of the bridge and then went down by Water Street because that's the only way I know to get to the west side. We didn't know exactly what was going on at that time.

Like I said it was heavy traffic. I think we left on that job about 9:30, had to be. We were fighting traffic and by the time we got down there I had no idea what time it was. I asked one of the officers where Rector Street was. She directed us past Rector Street because, you know, she was sending us to the staging. I guess by that time that's when they had all the injuries from the second.

We must have made it to as far as maybe Cedar.

Q. Coming up from the south?

A. Yes, coming from the south, heading north on

A. COOKE

the West Side Highway. At that time, we stopped and that's when I heard the rumble. I a heard a rumble. Both of us looked up and we saw a part of the building. I saw a part of the building coming down. I had thought it was just one piece of the building coming down. I didn't in my imagination didn't think it was the entire building coming down. And my partner, I guess she realized it before I did. She told me to drive, kept yelling drive, drive. I just yelled back drive where, because I couldn't go forward. That's where everything is happening. Couldn't go back because of the congestion from the crowd.

So somehow I made a U turn. I don't know how. I made the U turn. I drove down the west side and I went to go under the overpass. There is a little underpass.

Q. The tunnel underpass that goes around?

A. Right. I figured if we stopped there we would be all right. But then I said well, I don't know what's happening. We might get trapped in there. Anyway, on the way in that direction going back south, I looked in my rearview mirror and that's when you saw everything coming down. All you saw were people

A. COOKE

running.

I remember this one cop, she stands out in my mind. One dark little heavy cop running, but you know how you just saw the ball of flame and dirt and everything. It just engulfed everybody. So we drove. I kept telling my partner we got to go back, because I knew there had to be people hurt.

We got to the beginning of the FDR Drive, by the ferry, and I guess because of the way the streets channel everything, one of the fire balls or whatever, had to have made it as far as the South Street Seaport, because what happened at that time, it seemed like an explosion was coming from there. I thought an explosion was coming from there. That's when everybody started running towards us from the Seaport.

Now we had everybody running us from the Seaport and running to us from the west side, so we couldn't go either way. That's when all the ash and everything started coming. We had a couple of people stop us because they were complaining of chest pain.

Q. At that point you were like what, down by where the ferry is?

A. We were down by the ferry at that time. We had a couple of people stop us complaining about chest

A. COOKE

pain, asthma, couple of pregnant people, mostly about 2 or 3 couples were throwing their kids at us, they wanted to get the kids inside. Nobody could breathe and everybody was trying to climb up on to the wall of the FDR Drive.

This guy fell off the wall and hit the back of his head, so they were calling me for that, so we are trying to treat one woman with chest pain and one woman, she was saying her stomach hurt and she is pregnant and then I would have to go immobilize the guy off the wall, who fell off the wall, and the thing I remember most is when it got dark, when everything just clouded.

I knew at that time there weren't supposed to be any planes flying, but I heard planes flying and at that point I thought I was going to die. I really did. I thought what happened was that there was an explosion at the World Trade Center. Then I thought there was another one at the Seaport. I thought that was a secondary and herding everybody towards the Brooklyn Bridge, because everybody was asking me where should we go, where should we go. I just told them to get on the highway and head north or towards Brooklyn.

Now I'm thinking maybe everybody is heading

A. COOKE

towards the bridge and now here comes even another plane or a rocket or something to take out the bridge.

Luckily it didn't happen. We treated as many people as we could. Like I said, I immobilized the guy who fell off the wall. We got him to Beekman. I have no idea what time it was.

Q. You were able to transport him in your bus?

A. Yes, we transported about 5 adults and 3 kids. I don't know how we had them situated, but we got everybody to Beekman and as soon as I pulled up to Beekman, going the route that I took, is when I noticed the other, that's when the second tower collapsed. Everything was coming at us as we were trying to get to Beekman.

Q. You were going up, I guess Water Street there?

A. Yes. So we finally made it. We got to Beekman and that's when the cloud and everything was coming towards Beekman. By the time we got all of our patients out we just stopped and helped get everybody in that all the ambulances were pulling up. Beekman needed somebody with a head injury transported to Bellevue, so we transported that gentleman to Bellevue. He didn't make it.

A. COOKE

Q. That wasn't the same patient that you --

A. No, it wasn't -- I don't know whatever happened to him. We took the head injury to Bellevue. We were BBP, so what we did was we went to the old Bellevue station, just exchanged equipment and went back up to Ground Zero.

There we encountered a few more people, took them back to Beekman, then we went back up to Ground Zero.

Q. Over, where on the west side now when you went back?

A. Yes. It was like just driving you are going to find somebody. We went back up and that's basically when things were more or less in order. Like I said, I had no frame. I had no idea what time it was during all this. That's when they set up the triage at the terminal, the ferry terminal.

Q. Down by the Staten Island Ferry?

A. Right, and they wanted the ambulance staged in a certain way. I'm going to say I didn't like where they wanted us staged, because it was like an alley, so if one vehicle went down you couldn't get the other vehicles out, so we staged on the corner.

During that time we went back up to Ground

A. COOKE

Zero to see if we could help out there. All you saw was, you know, what was left of the vehicles and quiet. It was like a snow storm. There was nothing we could do at that time. We were released from the scene. We came back. Oh, wait, while we were down there staging, you ran into a lot of co-workers.

I mean it was just unbelievable the way we all greeted each other like we knew how lucky we was.

Q. Happy to see each other?

A. Yes, I didn't -- we went to the front and saw like two or three ambulances were completely demolished. I ran into one of my co-workers who had got out just in time. You know, at the end of the day

--

Q. Who was it?

A. Jackson. Chris Jackson, I think his name is. Then I saw I can't remember the people's name, Marla, she was there.

Q. Marla?

A. Marla, what is her name. I can't think of her name. I can't think of her name. She works 32 Boy. They were covered. She just looked like a big snowman. So I mean it was fast moving and slowest moving -- slow moving at the same time.



A. COOKE

We weren't there when the initial impact, but we got there right before the first tower collapsed. That's about it. We were released from the scene. Came in and luckily they allowed us to go home because we were so covered with everything, you know, fiberglass and whatever else was in there.

That's about the end of my story.

Q. Okay. Anything else that you want to add to it, any feelings, anything at all? Up to you.

A. Well, as far as feelings are concerned I appreciate the way the whole company handled the personnel. I just think a lot of people don't realize what we, EMS, went through. I'm quite sure you have heard that a lot. You know, fire, we might have a lot of people, the Fire Department lost a lot of people, Port Authority lost, but, you know, as far as EMS, I don't think we were recognized as far as our presence on the scene, you know. Besides that, nothing.

I wasn't too happy with the fact that the vehicles were staged around the World Trade Center, especially after the second plane hit.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right Alan, thank you for your interview and the information, and I just -- we will conclude this interview at 1749 hours.

File No. 9110041

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JARJEAN FELTON

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

## J. FELTON

PAUL RADENBERG: The date is October 10, 2001. The time is 1611 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Jarjean Felton, EMT at Battalion 31. EMS Battalion 31. The Fire Department of the City of New York. We are currently at EMS battalion 31. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Why don't you start with when you were assigned to the job.

JARJEAN FELTON: It all started, I mean, me and my partner, we was getting breakfast.

Q: Who were you working with?

A: Sean Cuniffe, 48 David, tour two. Me and Cuniffe, we was getting breakfast right here on Fulton Street, Fulton and Flatbush and I'm not sure if there was already a unit down there when the first plane hit, I'm not sure. We just heard them arguing, or saying help, a plane hit this and that, the World Trade tower. So we asked him to put us on that job cause we heard them calling I guess 31 Adam from our same battalion on the job. So we told them, we told the dispatcher to put 48 David on. We asked to be put on the job, I would say like, we was one of the first 5 units put on the job. Cause if you go over the MR you see 48 David tour 2. We was one of the first units put on the job. This was after the first plane hit, so we're going across the Brooklyn Bridge. We see the fire, we see the hole in there. We're just thinking holy, man, what happened? You know what I'm saying? So we get down there...

Q: When you came over the bridge...

## J. FELTON

A: We came over the bridge, they had everything blocked off. It was like a motorcade, we just followed all the, I don't know, they was unmarked cars. So I assume the Fire Department, the Feds. We just followed them onto the Brooklyn Bridge and down there. We came down, I think we came down Chambers. No, not Chambers. We came down one of these streets, I would say Fulton. Came down, we went up Vesey Street. I would say Berkley Street on the Westside Highway. They had a triage right in front, I guess on Church Street. I had wanted to go there, but Sean was like "no, no, lets go behind like where they assigned us to", cause it was 2 units there. It was a medic and 31 David. I'm not sure of the medic, but it was 31 David. They're another unit assigned to our station. So I had wanted to go down there, because I knew the guys, so I wanted to give them some support. But he was like, come on, let's go to the back. We went to the back, Vesey Street and Westside Highway. That's exactly where our triage was at. We parked our vehicle right here on Vesey Street. It was a Lieutenant right here taking our keys.

Q: Did you recognize that Lieutenant?

A: No, cause I've only been here like a year. So I don't know all the Lieutenants.

Q: Right.

A: My partner said he knew him. We gave the Lieutenant our keys like we normally do when you go to set up triage, I guess all the ambulance parked right here. It

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was ambulances, it was fire trucks, it was everything right here on Westside Highway. It was voluntaries-- I seen Fire Patrol. That's where I seen Von Essen, right there on Westside Highway and Vesey Street, right there. We was right here on the Westside, by the American Express Building where they got the make-shift morgue now, he was right under here. This foot bridge.

Q: The pedestrian overpass?

A: The pedestrian overpass. This was probably like, 9. Cause I looked at that MR, the first unit was there at like 8:55. So I would say this was like 9, 10 I would say. I'm not sure the time.

Q: Okay.

A: Give or take a couple minutes, I'm not sure the time. We was there, I would say at least 15 or 10 minutes. There was people jumping, we observed firefighters going in, we observed ESU getting on their Scott Packs, going into buildings and all that. I would say right around that time while we were right under here, under the Westside Highway and pedestrian bridge, I seen a second plane coming. I'm thinking isn't that plane too low? I'm like...then I noticed, I seen it turn. It turned and went right in the building. But we're behind, like this is the building, it went in, and you see the explosion in the front...

Q: On the other side than you?

A: Yeah we see...and I said oh my god, I just sat there with my mouth open like Oh My god, Oh My God. I'm sitting there like Oh My God, and everyone's just

## J. FELTON

running. But I'm like, why are we running it's on the Church side that all that debris and stuff was from, we was on the Westside Highway so, after that they told us to get along this, it was like this little, like a little sidewalk with grass and all that. They told us to move all of our equipment. We had unloaded our bus, we had long board, we had our stretcher, we had our de-fib. We had all our stuff out. We had our jackets and our helmets on. So they told us to move right here along the sidewalk. So after that, after the second plane they told us to move up, cause we was originally in the street. They told us to move after the second plane. Then, five minutes later...

Q: You had to move back towards the water?

A: No, they had us move like, towards the building more.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause we was in the street, we was in the street, then they told us to move towards the building more. Then eventually we ended up in the building lobby.

Q: In the American Express Building?

A: In the American Express Building. We ended up in the lobby. We're in the lobby, they gave us orders to go into the lobby, take all our equipment, whatever into the lobby because the second plane had just hit. There's people jumping, I at least counted more than...I didn't count, but at least, a minimum of 50 people jumping. I seen a minimum of 50 people jump, couples holding hands. But I was just so like, Oh My God. I've never seen nothing like that, cause I've only been here a year. I've never seen nothing like that. So we're in the building, we're in the American Express Building right

## J. FELTON

here, we're in there, so we got all our equipment, all the EMS personnel. There's a lot of people in there.

Q: Right.

A: The Lieutenant told us to take all our equipment and go in there. So I go in there, I try to use my cell phone to let my family and friends know what's going on, tell them if they're coming to the city, no, don't come to the city. Let my fiancé know that I'm alright. So I'm on the phone, then I just hear a commotion of people screaming like "Ahhhhhhhhhh..." My girlfriends like what's going on? What's going on? I'm like, I don't know, I gotta go. So I just dropped the phone and as...this building is like glass, made of glass.

Q: Right.

A: So, that time I just dropped the phone and I run, I see tower number 2 coming down. I jumped over the fence in that building.

Q: Yeah.

A: I jumped over a fence coming down. The glass...there was another fence that I couldn't jump over cause it had spikes. I mean, it had the gate with spikes. I was like, man, I'm not hurting myself. So I went around, and as I went around I'm sitting and watching the building come down. I'm watching the building coming down, and I'm standing there right in front of these guys, but I'm not really, I'm just shocked like, I guess, me and my partner we're in this building. We're in there with 31 Adam, a couple of units from our station. The building's coming down, and I see it, I just stop. I'm just

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sitting there watching it come down. Sitting in front of all of these guys. Then I just hear somebody call my name "Felton, Felton, come on!" So I just wake up, like out of my trance, like, oh no, and I just start running. We ran right out the door. It's like. PD, a lot of civilians was there too. So PD, they propped the door open, we run out the back of the American Express Building. So we're like right here, the building's coming down, so it's the smoke that's chasing you now. So we ran up this way, we ran up Vesey to the north end. Then they told us to park our vehicles here, on the North end and set up another triage. I notice there's like one or two vehicles left here, 407 was left here cause it wouldn't start. We had EMT Jackson with us, he's 31A. He's the person who just called me and woke me up. So we had him on our bus, drove it right here to the North End, right behind Vesey and North End. So we're right here. The Merv is right here, all of EMS. A lot of ---Fire Department. A lot of department vehicles, ESU, but it was still vehicles like haz-tac units, I seen the haz-tac units, I seen the guys with like the tinfoil suits. I seen a lot of fire trucks left there when the second building came down. The smoke, all the rubble, everything, we have on the masks now. Me, like me and my partner, we just jumped in, we parked right there. So I went down, I went back down. I don't know what made me go right down. I go back down, I'm like, oh man, oh damn, it's like...I still see some people there, but at that time I don't know what possessed me to go back down. I go back down it's like stuff, debris is all over the place. So I go back down to take a look then I just come back up like Yo, it's crazy. We were right here, I'm not really sure what time it is. I'm really not sure what time it is, cause I'm not worried



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about that. I wasn't worried about the time. I looked for my partner, they was like "Make sure you have your partner, you two stay together." Cause they was stressing that. "Make sure your partner is with you at all times." So, we were together. After that I don't know what happened. I really don't know what's going on. Really, I'm not really sure what's going on. By that time it was, one was still on fire, that was the last one hit, but that was the first one to come down. I would say like, right when I got back to Vesey and North, that's when one came down. At that time, I just left my vehicle and everybody's just running up North End Avenue. Whatever avenue it is, everyone is running up. I remember seeing we're all running, running like -----There's a little park here, we're running alongside there. I seen firemen, I seen everybody. I seen all types of equipment laying down on the ground, I seen Scott Packs making that noise.

Q: The alarm?

A: Yeah, the alarm for like say, somebody got knocked out and they're laying motionless. That alarm is going off. I just heard that, you just seen a whole bunch of equipment all over the place. Everybody just ran, everybody was just running like, yo... so we're along this, we're in the park, we're over here. The first building came down, everybody's like yo. Me and my partner's running together. Then I just turned back and looked like, Oh man. I'm not sure where the hell we went, but I know we was covered with dust after the first one came down. Everyone was like, Oh man. I seen firefighters - ---there's still people in there. It's total chaos at this point, total chaos cause nobody

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would have expected those buildings to come down. It's total chaos, and I noticed that when tower one comes down, that's when the glass in the American Express building breaks. So we're all over here, somehow I go back to get my vehicle. I don't know what possessed me, cause it's right here. I went back, got my vehicle, picked up my partner. We're just like driving around. He's calling his family letting them know that he's alright. Somehow we made it to Chambers, to the high school. The high school that they just took over.

Q: Right, Stuyvesant?

A: Stuyvesant High School, they just took over. That's where we got separated. Cause we had a patient there. We had a patient. He was the driver, I was the tech. We had a patient, we had 2 patients basically. We had an ESU guy who said he just made it out the building. He was alright, he wasn't really worried about his injuries. He was just like, I gotta go back in there, I gotta go get my guys. He was just worried about going to get his guys. He said yo, I lost my guys and this and that. I don't remember his name, but I remember him, because he was on the news like a day or two later saying that he just made it out. ESU, I'm not sure, maybe he's a sargent, I'm not sure. But I remember seeing him on the news saying that. I was like, wow, that was one of my patients. It was him and another civilian contractor. He was having an MI, but he didn't know. So a medic jumped on, hooked him up to an EKG. Like yo, you having an MI. So I took off my jacket, I had my helmet still with me. My partner was like, we're gonna take him to the hospital. I was like you got a medic here, so I'm alright, I'm

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alright. I'll just go back to the command and just chill out there at Stuyvesant High School. At that time, there was people just raping our bus, just taking all our stuff, like oxygen, taking everything they can get their hands on. Like, we're just gonna take your bus and just, there's a lot of patients and you ain't gonna need all this. It's a restocking station at Bellvue, so just re-stock then come back. So that's basically, I mean, I stayed there the whole time. I was really---cause I didn't know what to think. When I got to Stuyvesant High School, I was like dang, I know there's still people in that building. Cause I seen a lot of people running in the building the time we showed up. Getting in Scott Packs and running in the building. So I know there's people in there, I know there's like, man, nobody would have ever thought them buildings would come down. I'm just sitting there in amazement , the New York City skyline is just depleted now with these two buildings gone. I basically stayed on Chambers. I mean, the only thing that really had me frustrated was they wasn't really trying to let us go back down there.

Q: After the collapse of the second building?

A: Yeah, the second building. They wasn't trying to let us go down there. They had a lot of EMS personnel. I know there was still people around Ground Zero. There had to be some people trapped under trucks, I know that. But they wasn't trying to let us go down. That's the only thing, I really wanted to know why. I understand after it was un-safe. Cause I guess after that 7 came down. Well 7 didn't come down until like 4, 5 o'clock. So I was just wondering, they just kept us cooped up in there for a long

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time. They would occasionally let us go back out. I went back out, and walked around. It was messed up. Everybody talking about ---around that time--- there's another plane coming. I mean, we didn't know because we didn't have a TV and we didn't have a radio. We was just going our way. We heard it from the FBI agents or agents down there. We see people just running. I mean, I feel really bad for the people that was on the Church side, cause they really took the brunt of the debris on that side. I heard that an ambulance just got crushed on that side. That's why I really thank my partner for being like, let's go to the Vesey side. Cause there was another triage set up on the Church side, and I guess they was hit hard when the buildings collapsed and when that second airplane hit. I really thank him for that. Other than that, we was just cooped up in Stuyvesant High School for the whole time. Occasionally they let people go back down to the American Express Building. Later that night after 7 came down, they had it as a make-shift morgue too. It was a morgue after that. I was down there, I went down there to do morgue duty later on. I was just happy when I seen members from my Battalion come up. I was happy to see members from EMS period. They had city busses for the EMS workers and all that. I was happy to see them. I was just happy to see familiar faces that I know. That was basically all. I'm sorry for not knowing the times.

Q: No, not a problem.

A: I wasn't worried about knowing the times. I was just trying to get up outta there.

Q: Right, right.

## J. FELTON

A: That's just the best of my knowledge. I just know that I spent the night down there, that's all I know.

Q: You said in the beginning that when you were starting, you and Sean were getting breakfast on Fulton Street, okay, and you heard 31 Adam. 31 Adam was already in Manhattan?

A: No, as a matter of fact, 31 David was already in Manhattan. 31 David. That was the unit that was already in Manhattan. They was calling 31 Adam.

Q: Oh, to give them the job?

A: To give them the job. So we heard them and we was like, put us on the back too.

Q: Right.

A: Cause we was like, on Fulton and Flatbush. We was right there by the Manhattan or the Brooklyn Bridge. So we was like, give us the job. We made it there before 31 Adam. When we pulled up on Vesey Street, we came down Vesey Street.

Q: Right.

A: Now I really remember. We came down Vesey Street, probably hit Fulton, came down Vesey, and then he made us park right here. So we went up the end of the block, made a U-turn, came back around and parked. That's exactly how I remember it now. We came down Vesey, went up, did a U-turn,

## J. FELTON

parked right here. I would say by the Meryll Lynch Building. Like in between that. We parked right between the American Express Building and the Meryll Lynch. What's that, 4?

Q: Yeah, 4 World Financial. Okay, what was your vehicle number?

A: Um, 94.

Q: 94?

A: Yeah. 94. We was parked right there...

Q: And then you moved it again after the second plane went in they had to move it...

A: No, no. After the second plane came in, they had us move into the American Express Building. It wasn't until after the second building came down that they told us to move right there.

Q: And that's North End Avenue and Murray Street?

A: Yeah. I would say around there.

Q: And you said that vehicle 407 was also that, was that assigned here?

A: Yes, it remained here because it was dead.

Q: That was EMT Jackson's vehicle?

A: Yeah, Jackson, 31 Adam. And EMT Wright. Yeah, Jackson and Wright.

Q: Okay.

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A: It remained there the whole, even until the night time. Cause when I came back later on to do more duty, it was still there. It was cleaned out, but it was still there though.

Q: Okay, so when you first got here to the American Express Building, you had no patients?

A: No patients at that point.

Q: So your first patient was when you were up at the high school?

A: Yeah, basically. We had no patients from this side because, well the brunt of the work was being done on the Church side. This was behind, I would say it was Hotzollah, a few MetroCare, a lot of private, and we were there too, right there where we was at. Our EMS Lieutenant took control of their units too.

Q: Do you remember any other EMS personnel from the department that was in the American Express Building?

A: I remember my partner, Jackson, Wright, that's basically it. There was probably like 2 or 3 FDNY, and the rest was private. Along this street, they told us just to wait right there. That's another thing that had me pissed off too. Not pissed off, just kinda upset because we're on this job, we're just sitting here, not doing nothing. I mean, there's patients but we gotta just sit in here. I mean, I guess they did it for a certain reason. I wasn't there to dispute, that's not my job. I just did what they told me to do. They told me to wait right here, wait for patients. But I knew that all of the brunt of the

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work was on the Church side. That's why I wanted to go there in the first place. Cause I've never seen nothing like this, I'm probably a trauma buff, or something like that. I don't know. We went there, that was our first patient when we got to Stuyvesant High School. I would say 1300 or 1400 hours, I'm not really sure what time it was.

Q: And when you're at the high school, you and your partner split up, right?

A: Before yeah. Right when we got the patient, that's when we split up.

Cause he was driving and the medic jumped in the back, and I was like, I mean, I know there's nothing really for me to do except sit here and ride. There's a medic, so I just stayed.

Q: So Sean drove with the medic?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was the medic from the city?

A: He was from the department, yeah. FDNY, yeah. I didn't know him. I mean, I did see a few medics that I knew right before we got the patient. They was like, oh, we just got outta here. We took a patient that was burnt 90% to Cornell. This and that. But when we got our patient, I didn't know the medic. I gave him oxygen, I wiped his face off. He was just shaken up. He's like, I just got outta there with this guy too. I guess him and the ESU guy was on the same floor. He said that he was on the second floor and they had just got him out.

Q: And the ESU cop, do you remember him saying what tower he was in?

A: I'm about to say tower 2. Yeah, tower 2.



J. FELTON

Q: He was in Tower 2?

A: Yes. He was in Tower 2.

Q: Okay, and you were treating him after tower one came down, or in between?

A: No this was way after. Way after both buildings came down. I'm not really sure of the time. But this was after both of them came down. This was when they was like, it's unsafe to go down there, everybody come back. That's when all of the buildings in the surrounding area was on fire. That's when they was worried about 7 coming down. This was after they had moved, they had a triage point at Stuyvesant, had a little make-shift hospital there. One of the main triages was at Chelsea Piers.

Q: When you were at the American Express Building, you only saw the one EMS lieutenant?

A: There was a few EMS lieutenants. But he was the one that was directing traffic. It was EMS lieutenants right there at Vesey and Westside Highway. I was mainly right there among the firefighters and all the ESU cops. I specifically seen Von Essen right there at Westside Highway and Vesey. I remember because I was leaning against one of the trucks. I remember somebody saying they was a such-and-such Commissioner of the Fire Department, asking one of the fire patrols for a scout pack. I seen at least 50, 60 guys run in the building. Then it came down. I guess the second plane just caught everybody by surprise, cause everybody just thought it was the first

## J. FELTON

tower, then the second plane hit in a matter of 5 minutes or less. The second tower come down first. Seeing those people jump, cause nobody wanted to burn. Seeing those people jump, it was just horrific, really. Not only seeing them jump, but seeing them land too. It was horrific. I know a lot of those who jumped, at least 50, probably 100 that they can't find. Cause all that rubble is on top of them. That's a high number, I mean, nothing else. Just seeing everybody running, leaving their equipment, leaving their bus, everything. Then going back down there later on that night and just seeing fire trucks in half. The main thing was fire trucks and ESU vehicles. Cause they was right under the pedestrian bridge. Actually, we was right under the pedestrian bridge when the second plane hit. We was right under it, cause they told us to just set up triage. So we had all of our equipment right there, and we walked down. I dunno, I guess they was trying to feel the vibe, or just trying to see what was going on. They was trying to get a better view of what was going on. It was me and my partner being nosey, but we walked down together though. After that, I never seen so many people take off running when the second plane hit. Everybody running, ran in the building, ran out the building, ran into another building. It was late in the day when 7 came down. It was like 3:00 or 4:00 when 7 came down. Still seen a lot of people leave. When we was at Stuyvesant high school, we still seen people running from the smoke, all the way at Chambers Street, and that was far away. That's basically it that I remember about the day. Basically it.

Q: Alright thank you. The time is now 1646, interview is concluded.

File No. 9110042

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

JACE PINKUS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MS. ROM: Today's date is October 11, 2001.

The time now is 837 hours, and this is Lieutenant Pat Rom, the Fire Department City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and title.

A. Captain JACE PINKUS, P-I-N-K-U-S.

Q. And your assigned command area, the Fire Department of the City?

A. MetroTech communications, emergency medical dispatch.

Q. Okay. We're here to discuss the --

MS. ROM: Also present for the interview is --

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi, EMT, investigations and trials.

Q. Okay. We're here to discuss regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

If you could describe to us where -- how you first became involved and any details of what transpired for that day.

A. Early Tuesday morning, I was on the 7th Floor in my cubicle, and there were individuals stating that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center.

JACE PINKUS

Within a few moments, it was confirmed that there was a plane in one of the towers.

At that point, Commissioner Gregory directed myself, EMT Sam Harris and Captain D'Amato to join him, and we were going to respond to the scene. At that point, we left the 7th Floor, received our equipment and proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. What vehicle were you using?

A. Commissioner Gregory's. Sam Harris was driving, and we responded into Manhattan using the bridge.

Q. Brooklyn Bridge? Manhattan Bridge?

A. Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. Were you responding to any specific location at that point?

A. As we were driving over the bridge, we -- it was confirmed that there was a fire in the north tower. We continued into Manhattan, and we got off at Park Row, made a left-hand turn onto Chambers, and made a left onto West Street, and parked on the corner of Vesey and West Street on the corner of -- I guess that would be the east side.

Q. Parked on Vesey or on West?

A. Right on the corner of Vesey.

JACE PINKUS

Q. So you parked on Vesey?

A. Correct.

We attempted to get our stuff out of the vehicle, and as we looked up, we saw a plane hit the second building, and we noticed that there was a large ball of flame coming from the second building. It was at this point that Commissioner Gregory directed EMT Harris to move the vehicle because there was debris, fire basically covering us on Vesey Street.

EMT Harris moved the vehicle, I believe to the west side of Vesey, and I proceeded along with Commissioner Gregory and Captain D'Amato onto West Street, and I was in the middle of West Street in front of the American Express Building.

At that point, I met up with Lieutenant Davila. There were a couple of units on the corner of -- actually, in the middle of the street on Vesey and West. Within moments --

Q. Two or three would you imagine?

A. I saw at least three or four, and then there was a lot of chaos.

Q. On West?

A. Correct.

There's a median on West Street, West Side

JACE PINKUS

Highway, that would be north of the pedestrian bridge, and at that point we noticed vehicles started to come in numerous directions.

Within moments, I saw Chief Ganci.

Commissioner Gregory proceeded on West, south --

Q. Commissioner?

A. Gregory and Captain D'Amato.

Q. You went which way?

A. South on West Street. I saw Chief Nigro.

Within a couple of more minutes, Lieutenant Howie Hahn arrived, Dr. Asceda, Dr. Cherson, and then there was another doctor. I forget his name.

Q. Male, female?

A. Male doctor. I think he's one of the fellows.

Q. Where did you see Chief Nigro and --

A. Both of them were walking south on West. We were -- I was a few feet south on West.

Q. Both of them meaning who?

A. Chief Ganci and Chief Nigro.

At that point -- again, must have been another -- a few more moments, Chief Goldfarb I was in contact with. At this point, we attempted -- as units were coming into the scene, and I believe they had

JACE PINKUS

started to set up, also there was Lieutenant Brad Mann, Lieutenant John Nevins. The two of them ended up in the intersection of Vesey and West and for better terms they assumed sort of a staging officer.

Q. The two of them?

A. Correct.

There were a couple of Hatzolah ambulances coming into the scene.

Q. One, two, three?

A. I'd say at least two, and there was a large amount of vehicle movement north on West Street as vehicles were coming. To identify them, I couldn't at that point.

As units were parking their vehicles, I believe along Vesey, along West, they were directed by -- making assumption that Lieutenant Mann and Lieutenant Nevins were sending vehicles parking along Vesey, parking them along West, and units started to walk up with their stretchers and equipment.

Within a few minutes, I had a conversation with Chief Goldfarb that if needed we would be going to -- we identified American Express to be an area of triage. Time frame maybe ten minutes, fifteen minutes from the time I arrived.



JACE PINKUS

Q. That you talked to Chief Goldfarb?

A. Correct. I had a conversation with the one doctor I had mentioned earlier. He had asked me should he get the antidote kit. I said to him yes.

I believe he left to go to Dr. Asceda's car to get it. It must have been about another few more minutes went by, and we started to move the units with their stretchers along. I guess it would be in front of American Express Building, which is Three World Financial Center, and again within a period of time the -- I would say maybe about 30 units -- might have been two or three, per stretcher, but municipal voluntary and volunteers.

We noticed as we were standing in the street -- we looked up. We did notice that there were people jumping from the buildings. I personally saw about 20. There was a lot of chaos going on along the building. The M.C.C., which is the local command center for communications, arrived. It was traveling south on West. I believe there was a P.D.T.H.V. also that came.

Q. What is that?

A. The police temporary headquarters vehicle.

I believe there was another three or four

JACE PINKUS

Fire Department apparatus, again traveling south on West.

Q. So the M.C.C. and the P.D. Temp were all traveling south on West; is that my understanding?

A. Correct.

Q. And fire apparatus?

A. Correct.

Q. Approximately --

A. I believe I saw at least two.

Q. Could you identify them in any way?

A. No.

Q. Engine, ladder or anything?

A. No. I would say one was a ladder.

So at this point, it was all the chaos and the debris falling in front of the American Express Building, all on West.

We moved closer to the building. It was at that point that the decision was made between myself and along with Chief Goldfarb that if things went sour, that the units were to take cover into the building, and I started to walk along the line along with Howie Hahn, Lieutenant Hahn.

We took a roll call, writing down units as they arrived. I would say there was about 30 at one

JACE PINKUS

point, give or take. Might have been more. The task was given to him to specifically identify what units were there.

Q. Lieutenant Hahn?

A. Correct.

I identified a paramedic unit, and a B.L.S. unit. I called it a fast unit, that if we needed, they would be the first to go, and I kept them right in front of the building. I guess that would be going north on West, but not really on West, but more on the side street of the American Express Building.

We started to line the units up along the building, and at one point the line went west on Vesey, the units that were lined up with their stretchers.

Again maybe 10, 15 minutes goes by. I gave directions that if things were to go sour, that they were to take cover. It was at that point when I personally heard a loud rumbling noise. I thought it was another plane hitting the tower, and that's when the entire street filled with smoke, debris, became totally black, and we ran into the American Express Building.

At some point, I had been told that one of the medics was missing. I found out later that it was

JACE PINKUS

Carlos Lillo that was missing. I saw his partner Abrieu -- that's A-B-R-I-E-U.

Then there was other scuffle that there were other people missing, unable to confirm. It was Chief Peruggia that we heard was missing. Chief McCracken, it was reported that he was missing.

This is when we believed that it was a second -- like I said it was the first building that collapsed. We ran into the American Express Building. We took cover. We started to break -- myself, a couple of custodians within the building started to break windows.

A couple of minutes goes by. Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Goldfarb, and I believe there was another chief. I don't recall who it was. Things just became havoc inside the building, people running all over the place, all units that -- pretty much that were all lined up, everybody just ran in between patient care and just -- I don't want to use the word panicking, but, like I said, really got nasty at that point.

We went west of the American Express Building, maybe two exits. There was an exit onto Vesey, and then was a corridor which left out the back,

JACE PINKUS

and according to the map, that would be the Merrill Lynch Building.

We attempted to recoup, getting things together. We set up a little triage area in the rear of the American Express Building. There were other people walking around saying their partners were missing. Directions were given to Lieutenant Hahn by myself to try to -- there was a couple of paramedics. There was Paramedic Smiley I had contact with, and as I saw people, I attempted to find out if they knew where their partners were, and that was a combination of -- I'm sorry. Were you going to say something?

We set up a little small triage area within American Express Building. Within a few minutes, we couldn't even stay in the building. We couldn't breathe. That's the reason why the windows were being broken.

I ran out the west side onto Vesey. I heard people screaming that there was a Mayday. We heard a lot of screaming, a lot of yelling. The entire street was like the middle of winter. I noticed people running to their ambulances with their equipment.

I noticed at least two firefighters had ducked underneath the fire apparatus. There was at

JACE PINKUS

least five or six. I believe there was two engine companies that were on Vesey, and there was some firefighters ducking on Vesey.

Q. Can you identify them?

A. By number? I believe it was an engine, and I also noticed that there was a -- a suburban, a chief's vehicle.

The ambulances were parked diagonally or they were backed straight in to Vesey. The entire street was just full of smoke and debris, and you really couldn't see in front of you.

Again, I ran back in trying to find out where all my people were. That was one of my main objectives.

Q. And at that point -- who was with you at that time?

A. Lieutenant Hahn, Paramedic Smiley, a couple of paramedics from Metro Care, others I couldn't identify. At one point, I -- there must have been about 20 individuals start to regroup.

Q. Initially, the initial A.L.S. and B.L.S. you had lead, do you know who they were?

A. By name, no. By unit, no, I couldn't identify them.

JACE PINKUS

Q. Okay. And Chief Nigro and Chief Ganci?

A. I had seen them for a few minutes, few minutes at the beginning. I hadn't seen them since.

Q. Okay. That was that first time you saw them walking towards --

A. Chief Ganci asked me something regarding -- he said, "Captain." I don't recall exactly what he said, but it was a moment, not long. Like I said, they all went south onto West.

I believe Chief Martin at one point might even have even showed up in the building, in the American Express Building. They had also set up refreshments and water in the building. As people were running around, people running in, grabbing the water and running out, so I couldn't even identify who they were. They were running.

Like I said, there was a Mayday called. You really couldn't see too much in front of you while we were on Vesey Street. At some point, I started to run into the back of the building, because I was looking for somebody, and then I heard another noise, and that is when I took cover. I was by myself laying on the ground, covered my head, did a lot of praying.

After I felt it was safe, I got back up

JACE PINKUS

again. Again, we tried to set up another triage area, but it just didn't -- there was such havoc going on, that there was no control. People were just running, civilians and emergency workers, et cetera. I went over to a fireman I could not identify and gave him some water.

Back on Vesey, and at some point I walked down -- I believe this is North End Avenue to the front of the Embassy Hotel, which would be on North End between Vesey and Murray. I noticed that the Merv was in front of it, a couple of police vehicles, emergency service vehicles. I was talking to one of the cops trying to get another mask. Inside the -- backtrack a little bit. Chief Gombo I had seen earlier.

Q. Was that the one time you saw him?

A. Yeah. No, but I saw him later on. When I got back to the hotel, that's what made me recall seeing him, and Lieutenant Terranova.

I also attempted to call the center a few times, the communications center via cell phone a couple of times. I was able to get through. A couple of times I couldn't get through.

Ended up in the Embassy Hotel. There was Chief Goldfarb, Lieutenant Terranova, Chief Gombo,



JACE PINKUS

Chief Pascal, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Basile. I saw Captain Sickles, Lieutenant Yioras, Y-I-O-R-A-S. I noticed that he started to not feel well, so I went over to him, myself and EMT Harris, took off his coat. Looked like he was exhausted. We sat him down.

Within sometime after that, we were given directions to go along with chief -- myself, EMT Harris, and Chief Pascal were given directions that we were going to Chelsea Piers.

Prior to that, I walked down Vesey again, and I believe at that time the second building collapsed, because again the entire street filled up with smoke, and debris, and again we couldn't see in front of us what was going on. I heard a lot of alarms going off. We didn't know for sure if it was the building, and we heard a pass alarm, which is part of the self-contained breathing apparatus. I heard that from somebody. People just running up and down Vesey Street.

At that point, myself, Chief Pascal and EMT Harris walked down North End Avenue. That would be north. We continued walking down North End. We saw lieutenant -- I don't recall who it was, but there was a trailer. I believe it was on Park Place. We continued walking down to Chambers Street, and at that

JACE PINKUS

point, we met up with, again, another lieutenant. I don't recall who it was. Myself, EMT Harris and Chief Pascal got into the rear of a vehicle, an ambulance. We ended up on Westside Highway.

Q. Do you know which ambulance you were in?

A. I don't know.

Q. Or what vehicle?

A. It was a municipal ambulance, but I don't recall who.

Q. Okay. You're in the back of the ambulance?

A. Back of the ambulance. There was no equipment in the back of the ambulance, and as we headed to Chelsea Piers, we were flagged down on maybe 6th Street and Westside Highway. There was a pedestrian struck.

The three of us got out of the vehicle, provided some patient care. Turned out to be the patient was not a pedestrian struck, but was on the 80th Floor of the first building. Spoke to him, talked to him, trying to find out what was going on, comfort him, put him in the back of the ambulance. We strapped him in the captain's chair.

The first vehicle that we were in, and Chief Pascal flagged down another ambulance, turned out to

JACE PINKUS

be -- I guess it was a logistics unit, another ambulance full of long boards. That was it. There was an antidote kit laying on the floor in the back. Myself, EMT Harris got into the rear of the vehicle. Chief Pascal got into the passenger side of the cab, and we continued north on Westside Highway until we got to Chelsea Piers, and at that point we met up with Chief Kowalzyk, and the directions that were given to me, me -- and Kevin Mahon was up there also.

We attempted to identify what units were there, and I walked from -- I guess that would be 11th Street up to, say, maybe 24th Street where I met up with Lieutenant Bearman.

Our objective was to move the ambulances south to sort of organize the number of ambulances. That had to be at least 60, if not more, ambulances that were all the way up the Westside Highway.

Q. Okay. So you placed the second building collapsing at what stage?

A. I would say at the point I ran out of the building, out of the American Express Building. Time frame? I couldn't tell you. I would say maybe 20 minutes, a half an hour.

Q. After you arrived?

JACE PINKUS

A. After I arrived. At least, if not more. Time frame itself, specific time frame, I couldn't tell you, but I would say it was at the point I had seen Chief Martin.

Q. At that point, if we could reference it when we were going to Chelsea Piers, was how long before that?

A. I can't tell you. I know I was on the American Express for sometime. It was definitely some time that I had been there. There was a lot of activity going on in the building and along Vesey. There were some other individuals. Dr. Richmond I believe I saw also.

Q. Where would you have seen Dr. Richmond?

A. Well, I know for sure I saw him later on in the evening, but I believe I saw him, you know, I stand corrected. I saw him later on in the day, later in the evening.

Q. We are really focusing on up until the second World Trade Center collapse, what events transpired during that time frame.

At any time were you ever in those buildings?

A. Which buildings?

Q. In the World Trade Center.

JACE PINKUS

A. No.

Q. Your overall impression of what was going on, how --

A. It was something that I definitely never experienced before. I know I had an objective. It changed multiple times. When we first got there, we just thought we had a really bad fire, you know, the first building, and as we got out of the car we saw the second one, and it turned out to -- you know, we first thought that we were going to be waiting for patients to come to you, and that point when the first building collapsed, it all changed.

My main objective was to know where my people were at. But at one point I got scared that I had lost more than, you know -- I was lucky how everything turned out, except for one, you know. At one point, I think I had two or three people there. I had 60 to 70 people, so that was my first objective was to patients who were going to come to me, or my resources were going to go to the patients. It all changed. It was a definite experience that I -- even to this day, you know, still talk about. It was scary, especially when I -- the building -- I heard that noise. I thought for sure there was another building and --

JACE PINKUS

Q. On the reports of Paramedic Lillo, did you ever see him or that's something just told to you?

A. I might have seen him earlier. I mean I know Carlos, I know him for a long time. I might have seen him earlier, but I definitely do recall seeing his partner saying that he was missing.

Q. And you saw his partner at what point?

A. It was in the first 20 minutes maybe I had seen him.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to include as part of this interview?

A. There was a lot of talk going on, because there was -- there was a period of time at the beginning before any real activity was going on with us about the people that were coming in the buildings. There was a lot of comments about that.

MS. ROM: Okay. All right. We would like to thank you for, you know, being a part of this interview with us, and I'm going to say that this concludes our interview. It's now 903 hours, and this concludes our interview.

File No. 9110043

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CAPTAIN FRANK D'AMATO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

F. D'AMATO

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time now is 829 hours, this is Lieutenant Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and command.

A. Frank D'Amato, EMS Captain, Bureau of Communications.

MR. FEILER: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are conducting this interview in the Investigations and Trials hearing room, fourth floor at 9 Metrotech, New York City Fire Department headquarters. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present is Investigator Velez.

Q. Please state your name, title and command.

A. My name is George Velez, EMT, also an investigator for the Bureau of Trials and Investigations.

Q. Captain D'Amato, if we can just get a scenario of what occurred that morning of September 11.

A. Well, I started my morning here at headquarters on the 7th floor, communications. I'm



F. D'AMATO

going to say I don't know about the first plane hit, but after the first plane hit, I'm guessing 8:30, quarter to nine, we saw a lot of the Citywide tour commanders and their aides running past my desk. I asked them what's going on. They said a plane just hit the Trade Center.

At that time, we all went to the window and we saw flames coming out. At that point I thought actually it was like a small plane, like a sea plane or something. I had no time to think. Then we saw the magnitude of what was going on as far as the flames and Commissioner Gregory asked myself, Captain Pincus and EMT Sam Harris, to get our gear together. We were going down to the scene.

We all got into Commissioner Gregory's car. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge. I'm not really sure which route we took after the bridge, but we came south on West Street and we pulled into Vesey Street facing opposite the water. I guess that's east.

Q. I have a map here.

A. Let me see that. We came down Barclay Street and we made a left on to West and then we made another left on to Vesey, so we stopped the car at the corner of West and Vesey. I guess that's 6 World Trade

F. D'AMATO

Center.

When we got out of the vehicle, we opened the trunk, we put our helmets on and our jackets. At that time we heard another explosion which I thought was a secondary explosion, but which I later found it out was a second plane that hit. At that point, Commissioner Gregory instructed Sam Harris to move the car a little bit away from where we had parked it. I believe he parked it on Vesey on the west side of West Street.

At that point I tell you, I don't remember what happened with Sam Harris, or Jace Pincus. All I knew is that me and Commissioner Gregory proceeded south on West Street crossing in front of 1 World Trade Center, making our way to the corner of West and Liberty. There is a barrier that separates the two sides of West Street. We were on the side closer to the twin towers and while we were walking we were getting hit with small fragments of glass. We observed two bodies on the floor, partial bodies. I'm guessing they were jumpers.

As we made our way down West Street to Liberty, there was more and more debris falling. At that point I told Commissioner Gregory I think we should jump over the barrier and walk on the opposite

F. D'AMATO

side of West, because we were getting in too close, I was getting really nervous.

Once we got to the corner of West and Liberty, we met up with Chief Barbara, Chief Barbara. They were setting up a command post at the corner. I was there for about 10 minutes or so and what I noticed is we were getting a lot of ambulances starting to pile up on Liberty Street between West and South End Avenue I believe that is. There was no supervision there, so I told Commissioner Gregory I was going to start organizing the vehicles that got there, there had to be almost, about a dozen at the time.

I start setting staging up for some ambulances on the corner of South End and Liberty Street. After about 15 minutes, Chief Kowalczyk pulled up and he whispered to me to just think terrorism. Actually, he said, you know, be alert, just think terrorism. Then I think he might have made his way over to the command post. So again I start setting up the vehicles, I set up a little triage area right at the corner of Liberty and South End.

After about 5 minutes after that, Chief McCracken and Chief Grant came to the location where I was. They took control of the scene. Chief Grant and

F. D'AMATO

Chief McCracken instructed the staging to line up on South End off of Liberty so that we were one block west, parallel with the West Side Highway and we set up staging there. They felt it was more safer.

We were setting up. We weren't seeing many patients at this time. The whole area was kind of quiet. I was surprised that we weren't seeing anybody funneling out of the buildings, but I learned later on a lot of people were funneling out like on Church Street and West Broadway because there wasn't many people coming out at all on the West Side Highway from the different towers.

Whatever time it was when that first building started to come down, all we heard was just like a loud thunder that didn't stop. When you looked up you saw the debris starting to fall from the top, and a cloud of smoke on top and it was hard to judge where the debris was going to fall, because it were so high. Your depth perspective.

Everybody started running. Everybody in my area started running down the South End south. A lot of people running into little store fronts on that street. I was afraid to run into the store front because I thought that like the building was going to

F. D'AMATO

collapse, like a domino, and I didn't want to be crushed underneath the collapse. Thinking about it now, I don't think I was going to outrun a 110 story building, but I proceeded down South End and I made a right turn on Albany Street and as I turned on Albany I looked over my shoulder and I saw the big cloud of dust that was already on the ground like just making its way down the block, just like a movie.

I continued running down Albany Street and within seconds I was just in total darkness, the dust engulfed me. I had to stop running, I couldn't see where I was and I didn't know what was in front of me, what was around me. Everything was very quiet. Every breath I took in, my mouth was getting filled with debris, dust particles and cement particles. It was turning into like a pasty texture that you could almost chew. I kept spitting it out.

I was having trouble breathing. My eyes were shut. We didn't have any breathing apparatus or anything. I was just leaning up against the building that I was next to and I tried walking, but I kept banging into things in front of me. Again, I couldn't see 2 inches in front of my face. I really said to myself this is how I'm going to die. I can't believe

F. D'AMATO

this is how I'm going to die.

I started walking, I'm sure for a very short period of time, I mean seconds, but it felt like it was forever I was standing there. I thought, you know, the dust, it was so dark still. Again I don't know how long it stood pitch black for but it just seemed like it was forever and I just started panicking and I started screaming help, and I heard somebody answer me back. Like they started saying, keep coming, keep coming. Their voice was echoing and I couldn't figure out what was going on.

I started walking a little more just by feel with my right hand against the side of the building. I got to what I thought was the corner of the block, because the building had ended and turned in. It was a step. I stepped up on the step and some guy grabbed my hand and we started walking down and what it was was a parking lot attendant who pulled me into an underground parking garage.

At that point, he had hosed me down, I was full of dust. My eyes, my head, my face, he hosed me down. He put me into a car that he had started up, had an air conditioner running, I guess trying to just get me back to some kind of sense. I mean I was out of it

F. D'AMATO

for a little while.

After about 10 minutes, he had -- there was like a little parking lot attendant office there. I went into the office, there was a phone there. I couldn't remember the number to the dispatcher, I was just so out of it. My brother happens to work at 1 Metrotech, where he dispatches for Bear Stearns. So I had called my brother and I told him where I was. I knew where I was because there was a little receipt ticket with the phone number and I said go downstairs to the dispatcher, just tell them where I am, because at this point, I really thought that I was like trapped underneath this garage, because I didn't know that the building just pancaked down. I thought it was just all over the place.

I told him where I was. I gave him the phone number. After about another 5 minutes of sitting down, just catching my breath, I went out a back door of the parking garage. It was visible outside. It was almost like a tannish dust coating. Everything was just covered with dust, 4 or 5 inches deep. It really looked like a war zone. People were just totally covered. It looked almost like sawdust. It was just was just all over there.

F. D'AMATO

I finished walking Albany and now I was on -- like a little pier along the water. I don't know even know what it was. Esplanade. I'm looking at this map. But it was a little pier or boardwalk that runs along the water. All I kept hearing was the firefighters, I guess their alarms when they separate from people, just going off and that keeps sticking in my head.

The police that were there, everybody was walking south. They were directing everybody south. We started walking south. I must have been walking maybe about two minutes and I heard the rumble again. Again, it was the same noise, that thunder that didn't stop. It was the second tower coming down. It was the same scenario. Here comes a big cloud of smoke. Everybody starts running south on this little boardwalk. The people weren't knocking each other over, but I think there were spots where there was a lot of people, people were tripping and falling. I remember seeing like parents holding children in their hand, like covering their mouth and trying to run with them. One or two people fell that were helped up, not by me, but by people next to them. Civilians, police officers, and the smoke hit us again.



F. D'AMATO

It wasn't as dense as the first building, but it was still very difficult to breathe. I'm looking at the map. I wound up running into a little lobby of -- I don't know if it was an office building or a high rise, somewhere around I'm going to say Rector Place, looking at this map, or maybe one more block south and once I was in there they provided us with bathrooms. We were rinsing our eyes and rinsing our face. Again took about 10 minutes to get your composure back after going through this again.

When I came out it was like a big area. I'm going to say it was maybe this Rector Place area. There is a lot of grass. That's where I met back up with Chief McCracken and Chief Grant. At that point there was police boats, fire boats, tug boats. We started loading people on to the boat, who were civilians from that area on to the boats. The boats were taking people I believe to Liberty Island, Liberty State Park and Staten Island.

It took us about 20 minutes to clear that area. The people, they didn't want to get on the boats. They thought those locations weren't convenient or whatever. After we cleared that area, I was also with Lieutenant -- her name will come to me. She's

F. D'AMATO

from operations at the time. After we cleared the area an EMT, I don't know his name, pulled up in like a golf cart. Pauline Cronin. She was with us.

At that time, Chief McCracken, Chief Grant, Lieutenant Cronin and myself, we jumped into the golf cart after the area was cleared of civilians. We went to the Staten Island Ferry terminal. That's where we had a triage set up. Once I got there, I was actually treated for about 45 minutes with oxygen and my eyes were irrigated. That's pretty much where I stood up until about 8:30 at night.

Chief McCracken and Chief Grant had left that area. They had to attend a meeting, operations meeting on the scene. I don't know where that meeting was. They had left and Chief Villani was then there. I don't know what time he showed up. Chief Steffens came into the area where I was. I know Chief Brown came there. He was treated and transported. Again most of the patients we saw there were firefighters. Most of it was just eye irrigation. There was a lot of employees from the Department on duty and off duty at this location. A lot of doctors were coming down from the surrounding emergency rooms. We had an overabundance of people.

F. D'AMATO

I stayed there until about 8:30. Chief Villani sent me down to One Liberty Plaza about 8:30, there was some operation going on over there. Again we weren't seeing much patients. They sent me back to be more useful over there. I went over to One Liberty Plaza. I was driven there by -- I don't know -- some vehicle, some pick up or SUV. They had a big staging going on, a treatment center over there. There were reports that they might have to be cutting limbs off, people that were trapped and they had a whole big triage center there. I'm not sure who the supervisors were there. I'm not familiar with them, but everything was running fine there.

My eyes, from being right next to Ground Zero, the Trade Centers, now again, were getting irritated. I couldn't see, my eyes were burning. So I wound up transporting a patient with another BLS unit to Bellevue Hospital at around about midnight. This unit was -- I don't know -- if they were Midwood ambulance company, because they were going back into Brooklyn after we dropped the patient off. They provided me a ride after we went to Bellevue. They provided me a ride to Metrotech.

Because again I went down with Commissioner

F. D'AMATO

Gregory to get the ride down there. They dropped me back off at Metrotech. I got back to Metrotech about 12:30. That's where I met back up with Commissioner Gregory. At that time he told me that Sam and himself, Sam Harris, Jace Pincus had made their way north. I believe they were in Chelsea. That is where we had got separated. When I went south, they had went north.

That was my experience for the day. I must have went home about one o'clock that morning.

Q. I just want to retrace a few things. At the very beginning you say when you first found out about it, were you able to see the building burning from headquarters here or how did you get that information?

A. The Citywide tour commander aides said that you can see it. I remember him saying you can see it from Chief Ganci's office. Chief Ganci is around the corridor from me. I went over to Commissioner Gregory's office. I couldn't see what was going on. I really didn't see what was going on until we were on the Brooklyn Bridge going into Manhattan. It was just an amazing sight.

Q. Were you directed to any specific area by communications or you went on the direction of Commissioner Gregory?

F. D'AMATO

A. I went on the direction of Commissioner Gregory. I was assuming we were going to help out anyway we could. We don't have radio designations, myself, Captain Pincus, Sam Harris. I guess we were going to be more of an aide to Commissioner Gregory, who is the commissioner liaison and help out in any way we could. We were not directed in anyway by operations or had any task assigned to us at the scene.

Q. When you met up with Chief McCracken and Chief Grant, after they directed you to take, you had already set up staging?

A. I had initialized staging till there was another officer on the scene.

Q. Do you know who that officer was?

A. There was no other officer on the scene. That's why I started. I don't know how those ambulances were sent to that location.

Q. Right.

A. But when I saw there was no supervision, I told Commissioner Gregory I was going to take control of what was going on here, because there was just no direction. I started organizing and then once Chief Grant got there, I believe he may have gotten there a little before Lieutenant Cronin and Chief McCracken.

F. D'AMATO

He advised me that he was taking control of the scene. He directed me to have all the ambulances move a little further down and all on one side of the street. This way they have egress.

Q. Did the Chiefs remain there with you?

A. The Chiefs remained there with me. I got separated from them when we all started running when the first building started to come down.

Q. Was Lieutenant Cronin was present with you there too?

A. Lieutenant Cronin was present there also.

Q. What about the crews from the ambulances?

A. There was a lot of Hatzolah ambulances, Hatzolah also had what looked like a MERV there at this location. There were numerous vehicles -- Long Island College Hospital, lot of municipal FDNY vehicles. I had written the units down on paper. I don't know where that paper is. I must have dropped it while I was running. I don't know. I don't want to start rambling off units that I'm not sure. There was, even the people there, the faces I recognize, but I couldn't put a name to them. I can't give you names.

Q. At any time, did you have an opportunity to enter any of the buildings?

F. D'AMATO

A. World Trade Center buildings?

Q. Yes.

A. No, the only buildings I ever ran into was the underground parking garage and then later on during the second collapse I was able to get into another lobby of again, I don't know if it was an office or if it was like an apartment building.

Q. Did you have a handy talky on you?

A. I had a handy talky, the UHF, EMS radio. I didn't need to make any radio communications while I was setting staging up. There was a lot of stuff going on again, Chief Kowalczyk knew where I was. I didn't make any radio communications because again I wasn't in control of that sector very long once the Chiefs had gotten there. So no, I didn't make any radio communications.

Q. Other than the people that you told me about, the Chiefs, Lieutenant Cronin, were there any other EMTs, fire officers, anybody from our service that you can specifically recognize and put a location to them?

A. The last -- I -- again I said earlier, when me and Commissioner Gregory got to the corner of Liberty Street and West Street, Chief Barbara was at that location. They had started setting up a command

F. D'AMATO

post at that location.

I remember seeing when I first exited the car that we parked on Vesey and West while we were walking down the west side, I remember seeing Steve -- Chief Ganci's aide. Steve Mosiello. He was getting stuff out of his vehicle. I didn't see Chief Ganci but I saw Steve.

Q. Where was that?

A. That was on West Street between Vesey and Liberty. His car was parked more towards Vesey. Looking at the map, I guess on the west side of West Street.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to include before we conclude?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: Okay. I am going to conclude the interview. I want to thank you for your time in assisting us in this endeavor. The time now is 852 hours. We are concluding the interview now.



File No. 9110044

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PASQUALE FELITTI

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

P. FELITTI

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 9:57. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual. Please state your name, title, rank, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

PASQUALE FELITTI: My name is Pasquale Felitti, I'm an EMT assigned to EMS Battalion 4.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001?

A: Yes.

Q: En route to this call, what did you see?

A: You could see the North Tower with a big hole in the side of it. It was kind of chaotic, people running away from it.

Q: When you arrived on the scene, where did you park your vehicle?

A: Parked in between Fulton and Dey street on Church Street.

Q: Can you indicate on the map we provided for you with a 1, the location where you were? Okay? And what vehicle were you in?

A: Vehicle 108.

Q: Vehicle 108, okay. When you arrived there, did any civilians report anything to you?

P. FELITTI

A: No, they just kind pointed us over to another EMS crew where there was people hurt.

Q: Whom did you first report to when you arrived?

A: When we first got there, we didn't report to anybody, there was no one there. It was us, a New York Downtown unit, 4 Henry was on the scene, and 1 Adam. We went over to medic unit, the Downtown unit, and we helped out over there. When the second plane hit, me and my partner were separated. I wound up going with Lt. Melarango towards the South tower to get people out. We didn't go into it but towards there. My partner went with a cop who led him over to a church. There were patients over there. We got separated until the following day.

Q: Okay, what time approximately did you arrive on the scene?

A: We were coming out of New York downtown hospital when the first plane hit. I think we were actually 98.

Q: So the first plane crashed in at 9:06. So it was shortly after that?

A: Yeah, right away. Right after the first plane hit.

Q: 8:48, so you arrived shortly after that? Okay, I'm sorry. What did you do between the time the first plane hit and the second plane hit?

A: We were treating the ambulatory patients. Whoever was left in the area after walking wounded, we just picked up, put them in a bus and got them out of there.

P. FELITTI

Q: Then you said after the second plane hit you went somewhere with Lieutenant...?

A: Melarango

Q: Where did you go?

A: Towards the south tower, which was just hit. We came in between building 5 and building 4. Cause people were coming out. We were just directing traffic. Telling them "walk that way", up towards Church Street, Dey Street, over there.

Q: What did you do once you got over there?

A: Just directed traffic and stuff. That was after the second plane hit. Then they sent me back to go find my partner. When I came back, me and (inaudible) were separated, so I wound up moving the vehicle around to the staging area, which was Vesey and West Street.

Q: Okay, so just indicate on the map with a number 2, where you moved the vehicle to?

A: Okay, I never actually got to Vesey street. I was blocked by fire apparatus on the Westside Highway.

Q: So you never entered any of the World Trade Center buildings?

A: No, we didn't go into them.

Q: What happened after you got over to Vesey and West?

P. FELITTI

A: I was at the first triage center, which is on the corner of West and Vesey Street. I was with Mike D'Angelo, who is one of the communications guys that was there. I was triaging over there, when the first tower started to collapse. When the South Tower collapsed, we evacuated up Vesey Street towards Fulton. Yeah, when the first tower went down, we were right on Vesey Street.

Q: And what did you do in between the time when the first tower collapsed and the second tower?

A: Just re-grouped, there was a lot of dust, you know, a lot of people walking around. They started to set up a triage in a second building in between Vesey and Murray Street, around that area. A fireman was complaining of back pain. He said he was hit by debris and stuff that was falling from the first one. So as we started to triage him, it was awhile after the first building fell, they were like an hour apart, so I guess it was about 15 or 20 minutes after the first one fell that he made his way out to us. As we were assessing him, he said the second building was starting to fall. So me and, I forget the guys name, me and a MetroCare paramedic, we put him into a St. Luke's ambulance that was running, and we transported him to St. Vincent's Hospital. That was after the second building collapsed. His injuries were--he had broken ribs. We think it was a punctured lung because he had no lung sounds on the right side. So we transported him to 21 after the second building collapsed.

Q: You weren't with the St. Luke's crew?

P. FELITTI

A: No, the St. Luke's Crew wasn't there, they left the bus running. Cause what happened when the first building collapsed, the Lieutenants and stuff along the side on Vesey Street said take any ambulance that's running and move it. So people moving them. We got the patient. There was a St. Lukes bus there. It was running. So we just loaded him up and took off.

Q: Who is the person you were with?

A: It was myself. I was driving, and the paramedic from MetroCare. Paul, I think his name was.

Q: Okay. Do you know approximately what time this was? This was after the Second Tower?

A: After the Second Collapse.

Q: Okay, the Second Tower collapsed at 10:29.

A: Between 10:30 and 10:40 is when we left. Cause there was still dust everywhere. You couldn't see where you were going.

Q: Okay, and you brought this patient to hospital...?

A: 21, St. Vincent's.

Q: Okay, and from St. Vincent's?

A: From St. Vincent's we went back down to the Chelsea Pier's staging. That's where they had all the ambulances staging.

Q: Do you know about what time you got back to Chelsea Piers?

A: Probably between 10:45 and 11:00, give or take.

P. FELITTI

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, around that time.

Q: Okay, and what did you do after you got to the Chelsea station?

A: I reported to the Lieutenant there, I forget who it was. I told him I was half crew. We wound up taking a group of doctors from there to South Street, the ferry where they had set up another triage area. So me and a guy from the Bronx, who was just one of the vehicle movers or something like that. Me and him took the doctors over to the ferry. They sent--they left me over there. That's where I spent the remainder of the day from there from about 11:00 to 4 or 5 in the afternoon.

Q: And what did you see over at the triage area?

A: At the triage they did--walking wounded. I think they brought in a couple of firemen and police officers. Stuff like that. Not much came through there. Yeah firefighters and some police.

Q: Do you remember what any of their names were?

A: No, I don't remember.

Q: Okay, that's fine. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the events that happened up until approximately 12 noon on this day?

A: Not much, I mean, I think we did triage a little too close to the actual MCI. I mean, nobody knew the building was gonna fall like that, but, I mean, I think the engineers or somebody should have gotten there faster keep the firemen out. Like they

P. FELITTI

said on the news about the jet fuel, it burns at 3,000 degrees or something. I mean, no one ever expected something like this, so you can't say the Fire Department got caught without their pants.

Q: Did you make any radio communications during this time that would be important for us to know about?

A: Just that we were transporting one to St. Vincent's.

Q: Okay, anything else that you would like to add?

A: No.

Q: Okay, I thank you very much for having this interview with me. This interview is concluded at 10:06 AM. The counter on the cassette player is 169.



File No. 9110045

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM MELARANGO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time is 10:20. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

LIEUTENANT MELARANGO: Lieutenant William Melarango shield number 407 assigned to Battalion 4 on September 11th.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. In route to the alarm, what did you see?

A. I saw the north tower, smoke coming from the north tower.

Q. Upon arrival where did you park your vehicle?

A. I parked my command car on Broadway and Fulton, facing westbound.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map with a

1 where you had parked your vehicle.

A. I did.

Q. On arrival did any civilians report anything to you?

A. No, not directly towards me. Civilians were running away from the scene.

Q. Did you report to anybody when you first arrived there?

A. I saw a treatment area that was established in front of the Millennium Hotel on Church and Fulton Street.

Q. You went to this triage area?

A. I went to the treatment area and saw Lieutenant Medjuck and Captain Olszewski and Lieutenant Davila.

Q. What did you do at this point?

A. Just assisted with patient care details. There was a supply truck that pulled up with some additional oxygen tanks and back boards, which I helped off-load. Trying to get personnel established, make sure everybody had helmets on, safety considerations.

Q. About what time did you arrive on the scene?

A. I heard the explosion. I didn't see the second plane hit. I'm looking at your schedule here. So it had to be 9:05, 9:06 a.m. when I got to the building.

Q. What did you do next?

A. We assisted with patient care. We assisted trying to get patients treated and triaged and transported. Also citywide came on, asking to respond up to Park Row. There was a unit there that was involved in an MVA. I walked up there. I determined the MVA was minor. I told the unit, "Just go back to your staging area and the paperwork will be taken care of afterwards and I reported back down to the treatment area."

Q. Okay. What happened next?

A. Patients were coming in. I was mainly concerned about falling debris. There were bodies and body parts falling, but there was also parts of the building that were coming down. We were starting to think about moving the triage area to a safer location, to the lobby of the hotel.

At some point we heard the rumble, and

the building came down and everybody scrambled.

Q. You were in front of what building?

A. The Millennium Hotel.

Q. The Millennium Hotel.

At any time did you go into any of the World Trade Center buildings prior to their collapse?

A. I tried getting into Five World Trade Center to see if there was a triage area established in there initially. I couldn't get in. There were too many people coming out. So I really couldn't get in there.

Q. What did you do after the first collapse?

A. After the first collapse I had gone back down to Church Street because I was concerned about two of my crew members that were there. They had pulled up in an ambulance, vehicle 219. When I got back down to Church Street, the vehicle was on fire. I didn't see anybody in the truck. I was concerned about the oxygen tanks exploding, so I backed off.

A couple minutes after that a couple firemen brought an ESU cop whose arm was badly

injured. I saw a van and ambulance up on Vesey and Church. We brought him over there, and I started to dress up his arm.

At that time a fireman brought a DOA over to the ambulance, which I believe was Father Doyle.

Q. Father Judge?

A. Judge, I'm sorry, Father Judge.

I was treating the police officer's arm. We were wrapping it up when we heard the rumble from the second building and it start to collapse. We scrambled again.

Q. Then the second building came down.

A. The second building came down. I didn't go back down to -- I didn't go back down to Church Street after that. I went up to Broadway by City Hall Park. There was a couple of municipal ambulances there which set up a temporary treatment area. There were a lot of firemen coming to us with debris in their eyes.

Q. What was this location?

A. It was right across the street from City Hall Park on Broadway by the Duane Reade store. I'm not sure what the street is.

There were two ambulances there, two municipal ambulances there. We set up like a little mini treatment area. We had several firemen come up to us, several police officers. We flushed their eyes out, put them on oxygen if they were having some trouble breathing.

After I think maybe about 30, 45 minutes EMS citywide came up on the air and requested a supervisor, if there were any supervisors on the air. They made the request several times. Nobody answered. I came up on the air and told them I was available.

They asked me to report to -- establish a staging area at West Broadway and Chambers, which I did. I went up to Broadway and Chambers. When I got there, there was approximately maybe 20, 25 ambulances there mixed: municipal, voluntary, volunteer ambulances. We started establishing a treatment area there.

A few minutes after that a police officer came up to me and told me that the facade in front of Seven World Trade Center was gone and they thought there was an imminent collapse of Seven World Trade Center. I felt the location we

were at was too close to Seven World Trade Center.

So we advised citywide we were moving the staging area to North End and Greenwich Street.

Q. Okay.

A. At North End and Greenwich Street we established -- myself and Lieutenant Eppinger from Battalion 08.

Q. Approximately what time was this that you moved?

A. Probably around 11, 11:30. We reestablished at North End and Greenwich Street. We had a new staging area set up over there.

During the course of the day, assets just started showing up at the location. We didn't request them; they just started showing up. I had two bus loads of doctors and PAs. I think they might have just been driving by. I don't know. Or else citywide assigned them over there. But they came. They came with some medical equipment.

We set up a triage and treatment area in front one of the office plazas. We had set up



a hazmat sector, a morgue sector. It just became a larger operation as time went on. At any given time I probably had about 40 ambulances. We were ready to do even minor surgery at the location.

A camera crew came up to me, one of the production crews from some film company. We established and had lights set up in case we were going to be operating at night, which was a possibility. We also set up some sky lights for night.

We treated approximately maybe 20 patients, all secondary to the event. They were all respiratory. We had some cardiac patients. Not directly related to the event. They were transported, treated and transported.

About 10 or 11:00 I went back down to the command center at Chambers and West and said I thought the assets were not being utilized and recommended that they downsize that operation and close it down. They agreed.

Q. What time was this?

A. About 10 or 11:00 that night. Like I said, we treated 20 patients, but that was in the first couple of hours that we were there. As

time went on, we weren't getting any patients at our sector.

So I went down to Chambers and West and spoke to Chief Kowalczyk, and I recommended they close it down. He concurred. We released the ambulances back up to the Chelsea Piers. I also had MERV 3 at that location, Queens north. Myself and Lieutenant Eppinger and one physician and a couple of EMTs were responding to Battery Park City at the south end. We stayed there and we established -- there was a treatment area established.

Captain Parra was there. We stayed there. I was finally relieved around 3:00 in the morning.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this in regard to the events that happened from the time the first plane went in to approximately 12 noon?

A. Well, it was just a very large event. The EMS assets were just initially overwhelmed with patients, so there really wasn't time to get a regular ICS going. There were several sectors that were established.

There was very little command and control, I felt, in the initial first hour. There was no clear incident commander or chain of command. I thought there was a lot of free-lancing going on, especially there was a lot of free-lancing going on with voluntaries that belonged to hospitals, private hospitals. A lot of these people are not familiar with EMAP and the ICS system. So they weren't really reporting to anybody. They were just grabbing people to and going.

I think had the incident -- had the buildings not come down, the incident would have been allowed to work itself out. I think the EMAP and ICS would have eventually kicked in. There wasn't any time.

As far as any incidents like this again, the preplan staging was that we were supposed to stage inside the building and establish a forward triage area. It was just a very large incident. There just wasn't any time to get the ICS and EMAP.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

Q. Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is going to be concluded at 10:32. The counter on the tape player is 190.

File No. 9110046

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT BRIAN CIRILLO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today is October 11, 2001. The time is 9:22 AM. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual... please state your name, rank, title, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

BRIAN CIRILLO: Brian Cirillo, EMT, Battalion 4, 5523.

Q: Brian, did you respond to the World Trade disaster on September 11, 2001?

A: Yes I did.

Q: En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A: En route to the alarm, I saw the first building had been hit by a plane and smoke was coming out of the top of the building. So I turned my vehicle around and went towards it.

Q: So you were on your way home?

A: Yes, correct.

Q: Correct? So you were in your personal vehicle and you parked your vehicle and began to respond on foot?

A: Correct.

Q: Okay. Where did you park your car?

A: I parked my car underneath, right outside the Battery Tunnel exit on the Manhattan side.

Q: On arrival at the World Trade Center, did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No civilians. A firefighter actually approached me and told me they were setting up triage across the street while I was in front of the building. And they told me they were sitting up triage across the street, so I went over there.

Q: So whom did you report to when you arrived?

A: When I went across the street, there was no real commander over there. There was a female Lieutenant over there, I never even got the name. She had a command board. We would just wait for anyone to come out. Anyone who needed any help.

Q: Were you given a specific assignment?

A: Not a specific assignment. We were to hold still and wait for the people to come out.

Q: Were you asked to assist any specific units?

A: No.

Q: What was the exact location, to the best of your memory, of this staging area?

A: In front of the American Express Building. Westside Highway, more towards the divider of the Westside Highway in front of that building?

Q: Did you ever enter any of the buildings prior to their collapse?

A: No, I got in front of the building and a firefighter had told me that they were setting up triage across the street, so I went over there.

Q: Okay. Can you tell me what happened next? You were at this staging area, what happened after that?

A: What happened next was we were waiting for people to come out, just trying to do whatever we could, just witnessing everything that was going on. People trying to get out of the buildings and people actually jumping out of the buildings. After maybe 20 minutes, 30 minutes that we were there, one of the buildings came down.

Q: Where were you when the first building came down?

A: Same spot. Right in front of the AMEX building.

Q: And who were you with?

A: I was with a group of EMTs and paramedics just waiting. No one really got anyone's name. We just kind of waited, kind of shocked, not really talking that much.

Q: What happened after the first building came down?

A: The first building came down, we basically ran up Vesey street towards the water. I had to duck behind a car to protect myself from anything falling. Once the smoked cleared out a little bit, we got up and started looking for people. We found a few people and we set up another triage, I guess on North End. I forget what building, it wasn't the Merrill Lynch Building, it was the one on the opposite side. We were bringing people there, inside the building. It was still running, there was water there, there was a big open space that we could feel protected in.

Q: Okay.

A: We were just going back and forth to the front of the building, trying to take anyone who needed any kind of help, bring them over there.



Q: Okay. And you continued doing this...

A: We continued doing that until I actually, what happened was, I started walking back. I got to pretty much the same spot I was before when we heard the other crash and the other building started coming down. And we had to do the same thing we did the first time, just take off. I wound up diving into the front of the AMEX building, which wasn't great cover cause all the windows had blown out. But it was the first place we found.

Q: Okay. Who were you with? At this point do you know who you were with?

A: I believe around this time, the only man I remember being there, the only name I got was Chief Wells. I didn't get anyone else.

Q: Okay. Did you remove any injured civilians or members of the service?

A: Yeah, after about 20 or 30 minutes of doing what we were doing, we had commandeered an ambulance that was sitting there. It was pretty much the only one still intact, and the keys happened to still be in it. We found two firemen and another civilian who suffered I guess, smoke inhalation and couldn't breathe very well. We put them in there and tried to head uptown to the hospital.

Q: And this was about what time? You said after the second tower went down?

A: After the second tower went down. After the second tower went down, we continued looking, digging through whatever we could dig through. We looked in the AMEX building to see if anyone was left in there, went over to the front of the World Trade Building, pretty much all that was around us was firefighters. There still was a lot

of smoke. Across the street happened to be a parking lot. The parking lot seemed to be pretty much on fire. Every car in there just looked like it was on fire. There was black smoke covering everything. So I couldn't stay that long with no breathing devise.

Looking for whoever we could find. We happened to find 2, 3. I think three.

Q: So then you loaded them in an ambulance. Did you have a partner at that time?

A: No, I didn't have a partner. The chief who happened to be there with me said take them uptown, to the furthest hospital. Cause what was around was basically jam-packed. I did that. I dropped them off. At that time I asked them to flush my eyes out with saline solution, and I went back.

Q: Okay. Did you know what time you got back... approximately?

A: Approximately 2:00.

Q: About two o'clock?

A: Yeah. Give or take, you know..

Q: Okay, is there anything you would like to add to this, to the events that happened prior to 12 noon.

A: Prior to 12 noon? That was after the towers collapsed, no?

Q: Correct. Well, the North Tower collapsed, which was the second tower at 10:29. And then you said about 20 minutes later, so that would be a little bit before 11, you transported two patients.

A: Yeah. Give or take, it might have been longer. Well, personally, it was just horrible. I felt helpless unfortunately, people who really needed the help were upstairs

and we couldn't get to them. It was a bad situation all around, I couldn't do anything for anyone really.

Q: Okay, thank you for doing this interview with me. This interview is concluded at 9:31 hours. The counter on the recorder is at 163.

File No. 9110047

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALLEN CRUZ

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

## A. CRUZ

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11, 2001.

The time is 10:23 and I am Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area, shield number of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

ALLEN CRUZ: Hi, my name is Allen Cruz. My shield number is 3361 and I work for the New York City Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services and my title is LSU and de-con specialist.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A: Well, I got there after the first crash, just before the second crash. I went down Fulton Street, and I parked my vehicle on Fulton at the corner of Church street.

Q: Can you indicate on the map where you parked your vehicle with a number "1?"

A: Sure. A number 1? Right here.

Q: Okay. Upon arrival did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No, not at all. Everyone was there screaming and running for their lives.

Q: Whom did you first report to when you arrived there?

A: I reported to no one.

Q: To no one?

A: Right.

Q: What did you do when you arrived there?

A: When I got there, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I got to the corner of Fulton and Church, I saw a couple of my vehicles parked on Church Street, right in front of the World Trade Center. As I exited my vehicle, I saw this huge fire up on the building you know? Numerous people running out and running up the block towards me, towards my vehicle screaming and hollering in panic.

Q: What did you do next?

A: I did...again, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I was in shock and what I did was I helped some of the people get up off the floor, cause they were falling and tripping all over themselves, and I kept telling them to keep on running. A lot of people, they thought they were safe. They ran out of the building, across the street and like myself, they thought it was just the average fire. They proceeded to just stand there and look up, and again, they thought they were safe because they had crossed the street by my vehicle. As myself, I thought I was safe, and we just stood there in awe, just looking up. Again, while I was there looking up, there were still people running and falling and I proceeded to run to them, pick them up and shove them and tell them keep running, please,

keep moving, keep moving. Just stood there like everybody else, just watching this unfold.

Q: Okay, how long did you do this for approximately?

A: I did that up until the second plane hit.

Q: When the second plane hit, what did you do?

A: Well, I was standing, again, helping these people get up, looking up, watching these people jump out of the windows. Really, I was in shock. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Or maybe I didn't want to believe what I was seeing. As I was standing, there was a bunch of people hiding behind and around my vehicle. As we were standing there, this one lady to my left grabbed me really really tight, my forearm, my left forearm, and we were both looking up at this fire. We both hear this rumble, and I felt a vibration, we looked slightly to the left, all of us, there's a whole bunch of us right next to my vehicle, and here comes this plane, a huge plane. The lady next to me says Oh my God, it's gonna hit the building. I didn't want to give her false information so I said Gee, I don't think so, well I hope not. I mean we're looking at it sort of in three dimensions, so I'm thinking it's gonna go behind the building. From where we're standing, it's gonna go right behind it, but it was too big and far too low. At that moment I said it's gonna hit, it's actually gonna hit. And it hit. She screamed, she said oh my god. At which point I said everybody just run, and there were some curse words. I told everybody you gotta run, run, run. They proceeded to run. I in turn, jumped into my vehicle and a whole bunch of debris just came crashing down on top of my vehicle at which point I said no, I exited my vehicle, and I too

ran behind my vehicle. Unbeknownst to me, there were still people hiding not only behind, but underneath my vehicle. A few seconds, a few minutes maybe went by and we gathered our thoughts and I came out from behind my vehicle and I told everyone who was behind my vehicle and in the streets to run, to keep running. At which time, I ran towards the building, to Church Street. Some of the EMS people were there, and I said, everybody drop what you're doing and just get the hell out of here. Run, run, just leave everything, just go, run, run. At the same time, there was a lot of debris coming down, and they did. They dropped what they were doing, and they just scattered all over the place. Again, people were just falling and stumbling, and I kept picking them up and pushing them to run. Then I started picking up all the equipment that the guys left behind. I started gathering stuff off the street, I started putting it by my vehicle, on the street corner. I wanted to compile everything in one neat little corner. Maybe it's a habit. That's what I do, that's my job. I retrieve equipment. I didn't want to abandon everything, so I started moving all the equipment out of the street, towards my side of the street, when the building collapsed.

Q: This is when the first building collapsed?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. What did you do after the first building collapsed?

A: I ran like hell. I left everything there and I ran like hell. I ran to my vehicle, and I jumped inside. Just as I was about to go into gear, I noticed that there were feet underneath my vehicle. So I left it in park, jumped out, and there were people still hiding underneath it. At which time I said you people gotta go,



you cannot stay here, you gotta go. The rumbling's coming down. They got up out, I dragged the lady out from underneath, there were still people around and behind it, I told them you all gotta run, and they did. At which time the thing came down, a big wall of smoke came and I hid behind my vehicle. I just took a big breath and just waited for it to pass.

Q: You stayed there? What happened next?

A: I don't know how much time elapsed, but it got really dark and I couldn't breath. I was covered in soot. Again, I don't know how long it lasted.

Q: Were you there when the second tower collapsed?

A: Not in that location, no.

Q: Okay, where did you go between from when the first tower collapsed to the second tower?

A: I got back in my vehicle when I thought it was safe. Again, I was facing Church street. So what I did was, I made a right onto Church, stunned. I was stunned, I still could not believe what was happening.

Q: I'm sure.

A: I made a left on Vesey. Vesey and Vestry always get me confused.

Q: You came up, you turned onto Church...

A: Vestry? Vesey. I came down here, I made a left on Vesey. And I proceeded to go between number five World Trade and number seven World Trade.

Q: Approximately right here?

A: I came across here, right. Crossing West Street. Somewhere around here, I don't recall. They say I parked somewhere alongside on the right side of this street here. There were ambulances all parked on the left, and I parked on the right.

Q: So you parked approximately right here?

A: Right about, I believe so.

Q: Which is in front of 7 World Trade Center, is that correct?

A: No. We passed 7.

Q: Here's 7.

A: Oh, 7. Ok, West street. Sorry, forgive me. Here's West.

Q: This is Vesey.

A: No, we passed this. Somewhere along this street, before West Side Highway.

Q: Okay, so by the telephone company building?

A: Yeah, I would have to assume.

Q: So you were on Vesey Street, just before West. Is that correct?

A: Just before West.

Q: So you were approximately right here?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. The map is gonna indicate a 2 where the LSU is moved to next. Correct?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, after you got there...

A: Would this be North End Street here, the West Side Highway?

Q: This would be the West Side Highway.

A: Okay.

Q: North End is over here

A: Okay, I got it. Right about there.

Q: So after you parked there, the first tower has already come down.

The second tower has not come down yet, is that correct?

A: Right, that is correct.

Q: You parked here, what did you do next?

A: Here, again, I don't recall.

Q: Do your best.

A: Again, there was a bunch of guys there. There was a bunch of guys there. All of the ambulances, like seven of them parked on one side of the street and I was on the other side. Again, I was the only vehicle parked there. We came out, we couldn't believe what was happening. We started to treat people, they were treating people here. I recall that. Then somebody said run, the other building's gonna fall. Again, I don't know. I don't recall if the other building fell at this point, or as we left. There's a moment there where I don't remember.

Q: To the best of your memory, I don't want to pressure you.

A: I think they said to move cause there's a threat of the building falling, or a threat of another plane. They said another plane was gonna hit, so run. So we proceeded, everyone got into their vehicles and we proceeded to go up to West End Street. The Lieutenant was standing there facing the units.

Everyone got into their vehicles and we abandoned that area. There was a threat of the building falling, or another plane was gonna hit. We proceeded towards North End Street.

Q: North End, okay, this is North End Street.

A: As we approached the Lieutenant, he had all the vehicles. He was telling them all to go to the left, go to the left. He told me to go to the right, which is towards North End I guess, by the marina. There's a marina there somewhere.

Q: The marina would be right here.

A: Okay, so we came up here, this street. Everybody went this way, and I went that way. Right over here somewhere, cause I remember there's a building in front of us.

Q: So right here on North End, just south of Vesey is where you parked your vehicle next?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, the map is gonna indicate with a number 3 where your LSU was parked next. Okay, so now you parked over here, has the second tower come down yet? Or you're not sure? If you're not sure that's fine.

A: A building came down, only I don't know if it was number 7 or number 2.

Q: Okay, number 7 didn't come down till much later.

A: So then it was number 2 that came down.

Q: So then number 2 came down...

A: Yeah. Well, it didn't come down that time. The guys were setting up triage at some hotel over here, and we were treating people here. We were treating an awful lot of people here.

Q: On North End, just south of Vesey, you were treating people?

A: As we were doing that, somebody said, there's another plane. That's it, another plane is coming, another plane is gonna crash. We heard this rumble, that's when the building came down. We all thought it was a plane. Everybody just, firefighters, myself, we were treating people, everybody just threw themselves down to the floor, and they hid all around my vehicle. You know, anything they could find, they just threw themselves down. We actually thought it was another plane. That's right. That's when the other building came down. Because we heard the rumble (BOOM). Just crashing down, I thought it was another plane. Yeah, exactly, that's what happened.

Q: Tower two came down, then what happened next? What did you do? What did you see?

A: Tower 2 came down, everybody evacuated the hotel area where they had the temporary triage center. Everybody got in their vehicle. Actually, they didn't get in their vehicles, they ran. Everybody just evacuated. They said run, clear, and everybody just took off. I again, stood. I stood there. I went to the hotel, it was empty. See, I wouldn't leave the vehicle cause I have to stay with that vehicle at all times. I have all the extra equipment in case the guys need something. Plus, my portable radio was going dead. If they needed me, I needed to be on the air, so what I kept doing was going into my vehicle and monitoring

the radio in my vehicle, instead of my portable, so I kept switching back and forth. The building came down, everyone took off, I hid behind my vehicle. I hid outside my vehicle, I was looking up this street here.

Q: Up Vesey Street?

A: Vesey. I just saw this huge ball of smoke coming at me. So I was trying to time it. I was trying to wait for it and time it. I escaped the first one, so I figured, okay, no sweat. I took a deep breath, get down, and just wait for it to pass. But unbeknownst to me, I'm looking up the street here, I hear this rumbling sound coming from behind me. As I'm crouched down, and as I turned around, I see this huge ball of smoke coming. I didn't expect it to come from behind me. It came around the building, and it came from behind me, so it kind of caught me off guard. So I just laid myself down on the floor, by the tire, I took a deep breath and I just waited. It blew past me, and I waited a few seconds. I found my door, I couldn't see anything. I found my door, and I jumped into my vehicle. While doing so, I bumped my head up against the steering wheel. So I crouched myself underneath my steering wheel, by the pedals, and I just crouched and waited. I don't know how long, but I just waited there until I was able to see light. Then I got out of my vehicle, there was people still scurrying around, but it was somewhat deserted, very dismal. I walked over to the temporary triage center, and there was absolutely nobody, not even anybody in the hotel, in the lobby. A moment ago there was people there, but now there was nobody. There was like, seven vehicles parked in front, and no body. So everybody ran towards Chambers Street.

Q: So they ran North on North End Street, towards Chambers?

A: Right, then at this point, I noticed that some of the vehicles had their ignition keys still in the ignition. So I jumped in the vehicle, I turned it on, and I drove it to where everybody was staging at Chambers Street. Then I walked all the way back, got another vehicle, and took it over there and parked it. Came back, the third vehicle wouldn't start, it had the keys in it and it was dead. So I walked back to my truck, my LSU and I went straight over to where that vehicle was, took out my cables, and I jumped it, jump started it. I legally parked my vehicle, to this day it bothers me, cause the street was deserted. Instead of just leaving my vehicle there once I got that vehicle started, I actually got into my vehicle and legally parked it. I proceeded to move that vehicle, I jumped it. I moved two, I jumped two. Then all the other people were here.

Q: Other people were on Chambers and North End?

A: Yeah. Then one of the fellows that was here said that he had left his vehicle in front of mine, vehicle 240. I remember seeing it in front of me. So I said okay, give me your keys and I'll go and get your vehicle. He said please don't go there, don't go, it's dangerous. I said look, you need the vehicle, I'll go get it for you. I can walk faster than you it's no big deal, it's no problem, I will handle it. He gave me the keys and I walked all the way back and I got his vehicle. Actually, I didn't get his vehicle. When I got to his vehicle, he had given me the wrong key. That pissed me off. I had to walk all the way back to him, that was his vehicle. I said look, you gave me the wrong damn key, at which point he said I'm going with you. I said okay, fine. So we both walked all the

way back, he got into his vehicle, I got into mine, and I waited for him to start his vehicle up in case he needed my help, in case he needed my jump. He got it started, the lights came on, he made a U-turn, he pulled out, and I pulled out with him. We all met at Chambers Street.

Q: Do you know about what time this was that you finally got up there?

A: Honestly, no sir. I could not tell you. The time I couldn't tell you.

Q: I'm sure it was all a blur.

A: Yeah, I was lost for time. I didn't think of looking at my watch or nothing.

Q: After you got to Chambers and North End, what did you do up there?

A: At which time I proceeded down Chambers Street and I parked my vehicle on the corner of Chambers and West.

Q: Okay. Right here?

A: Chambers and West Street, right on this side of the street. Actually, I parked it right in front of I think it was the BMCC College.

Q: Okay, so the number 4 indicates where your vehicle was parked next, on West and Chambers. When you got there, what happened next?

A: I stood there with my vehicle, I stood there and I started watching this whole operation unfold. Units started coming, vehicles started coming, bosses started coming, Police Department, Fire Department, people started coming. They just all convened on that one corner. I just stood there and



watched that whole operation unfold. Every time when my EMS people came-- the command truck came and the chiefs came, I reported to them, I said look, I'm parked over here. I said if you need anything, I got the LSU parked on this corner. They said okay, what I need from you Allen (that was my chief) is I need the table that we have that they can write stuff, I have that table.

Q: Like, the command board?

A: Exactly. I went to my vehicle, I got it, I gave it to him. For the next thirty- something hours, I just stood with my truck right there in that corner. I was there until Wednesday, the next day.

Q: Wow, that's a long time. Is there anything else you would like to add to this, anything else you would like to tell me about the events that happened up until about noon that day?

A: Nothing that you haven't already heard or seen, or felt for yourself. I mean there was nothing to really say to describe this whole catastrophe. It's really hard to describe to be perfectly honest,, I mean to see this happening, it's really hard to describe. No, I can honestly tell you, eighteen years plus on this job, and I've seen the worst the city has to offer. But nothing to this magnitude. The feeling was so overwhelming. It was an incredible thing, I'm really lost for words at this time. I really am, forgive me.

Q: No, please, no forgiveness necessary. I thank you very much for allowing me to conduct this interview.

A: You're very welcome.

Q: The time is 11:44, the counter on the tape player is at 322.

File No. 9110048

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PATRICIA ONDROVIC

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

## P. ONDROVIC

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 6:48 AM, and this is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, title, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

PATRICIA ONDROVIC: Patricia Ondrovic, shield 1634, EMTD, assigned to Battalion 8.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A: Yes.

Q: En route to the alarm, what did you see?

A: I saw the two towers burning.

Q: On arrival, did any civilians report anything to you?

A: No.

Q: Where did you park your vehicle when you arrived?

A: In the middle of Vesey Street between West and whatever is East of Vesey.

Q: On this map, can you indicate with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle?

A: Um...it was on Vesey between West and the West Side Highway so, it was, I'm not sure if it was this block or that block.

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Q: Okay, just approximate and put a number 1.

A: I guess it was over here.

Q: Okay, and what vehicle were you in?

A: Vehicle 90.

Q: Vehicle 90. Whom did you first report to and where?

A: On Vesey and West, in the middle of the block, there was an EMS captain.

I never got his name, I don't know who he was. I said I was 07 Charlie, he said park it over there. That was the last I saw of him.

Q: Were you given a specific assignment?

A: No. Stand by. Take the equipment out of the vehicle and stand by.

Q: Were you asked to assist any specific units?

A: No.

Q: Can you tell me what you did when you arrived at that location?

A: We took the stretcher and all the crash equipment out of the bus and we formed up alongside one of the buildings on Vesey. I don't remember which number it was. We were in a line of several other ambulances. Next to us was a St. Claire's ambulance and a Cabrini Ambulance. I think there was only one other EMS ambulance on that block at the time I was there. That was vehicle 350, 08 David. I didn't know a lot of the people there, I didn't know the EMS captain that was there. There were no patients that we could see at that point. I think they were trying to set up a triage in front of the building that the ambulances were all parked at. I guess we were supposed to be

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the first on the wave to take patients out, and there was a Tex-Mex restaurant across the street. I went in to use the bathroom, that's where the Police were using their command center. I saw a police captain that I knew, and he came out to me. He looked absolutely terrified, he was shaking, he was pale, he was sweating. I looked at him, I said what's wrong? He said there's another plane headed our way, and they just blew up the Pentagon. I said, another plane? What are you talking about? I hadn't realized that planes had hit this, I thought they just set bombs off. I didn't realize when I got there that planes hit it. I said, what do you mean another plane? He said two planes hit the World Trade Center. So I'm thinking a little Cessena. How can a little Cessena do all that damage? He said no, 757s. I said big things? See I was there for about 25 minutes before I knew that planes had crashed into this. We just got assigned to do stand-by. We didn't know what the stand-by was. I mean, who thinks something like that? You just think they hit it again. So I said, what do you mean there's another one headed this way? He said, it's on the TV, there's a TV in there and it said that the Pentagon has been hit. Then we all went outside cause they had on the police radio that there was another plane headed in our direction, we all went outside and started looking up in the sky. Then the EMS captain said everyone grab your equipment, get to your vehicles and stay with your vehicles. My partner and I grabbed our stretcher, went to put it in the back of our vehicle, and at that time, I think it was the lobby of the building behind us blew out. Everybody started running, I didn't see him again that day. He got thrown one way, I got

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thrown the other way. I started running towards the West Side Highway, and there was another building on the corner, I guess it was a federal building, cause it was all the green and gray uniforms with the Smokey the Bear hats, the cops in there. I went to run in the lobby cause all of a sudden you couldn't see anything. There was smoke, there was debris, there was everything flying around. I ran into the lobby cause I had no idea what had happened and the cops that were in there were telling everybody get out, get out, get out. Where are you gonna go? Stuff's blowing up. So I ran back out and I started running west again. At that point, there was a car on the corner of I think I was here at that point, on the West Side Highway.

Q: West Side Highway and Vesey?

A: And Vesey, yeah. I was still on Vesey, cause the building that blew up on me was on Vesey, it was on the corner next to the West Side Highway. Cause I know I was running west, I didn't run that way. Thank God, I would have been dead had I run the other way. But I ran towards the West Side Highway, and I kept running up Vesey. As I was running up Vesey, the first car blew up on me on the corner of Vessey and the West Side Highway. That set my turnout coat on fire, that set my hair on fire, and that set my feet on fire. I kept running. I got news for you, those turn out coats need to be called burn out coats, cause this thing caught up in flames. They cut two inches off my hair in less that two minutes, my coat was completely engulfed, and that was the only way I could see where I was running at that point, because I had a glow from my coat.

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There's hundreds of cops all running up there, and I ended up running through this park, and I couldn't even see where I was running anymore. I kept running North.

Q: Through North Park?

A: I guess that's North Park. It's a big green, grassy area, and there's nothing there. As I was running up here, two or three more cars exploded on me. They weren't near any buildings at that point, they were just parked on the street. The traffic guys hadn't gotten a chance to tow anything yet, cause this was all during the first hour I guess of this thing happening. So there were still cars parked on the street that were completely independent of that. Three cars blew up on me, stuff was being thrown. I went home all bruised that day. Thank God it was only bruises. I just ran into this park along with a bunch of other people, and stuff was still blowing up, I don't think I looked back, but you couldn't see anything, everything was just black. I was running and I was falling over people, cause people were crawling on the ground cause they couldn't see anymore. I just kept on running north. I could smell water, so I just kept on running towards the water, cause I knew that my coat was on fire, and I figured well, if I can see a boat over the water, I'm just gonna jump onto the boat and take that thing to Jersey, cause no one wants to blow up Jersey. Stuff is still blowing up behind me, as I'm running. I can hear stuff exploding. I could hear rumbling, the street under me was moving like I was in an earthquake. I've been in those, so I know what they feel like. It felt like an earthquake. There was no where safe to go. As I was running north in this park, and then I could start seeing again a little bit, and I just kept looking in the sky. Cause the captain was saying

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there's another plane heading in our direction, I was looking for another plane. I saw something in the sky, it was a plane, but it was way out. It looked like it was over Jersey or something, then it wasn't there anymore. I saw a small fireball, and it was gone. I saw two other planes. One came in one way, and the other came in the other way, and there was a plane in the middle that was way far off in the distance. Then the plane in the middle just disappeared into a little fire ball. It looked like the size of a golf ball from where I could see it. And the other two planes veered off into opposite directions. I just kept on running north. About fifteen blocks later, I had no idea that that was just the first tower that had come down. I had no idea at that time that that's what that was, and the other buildings were being affected, of course, by that building falling. I found another ambulance, I believe it was the 08 Adam, because it was Valdivia and Jose Perez. Joseph Valdivia used to be my partner on tour 3, and when I finally caught up to them, I told them what was happening. I told them whatever you do, don't go back that way cause they just blew up triage. I thought that they blew up our triage sector, cause that's where the command was and everything. That was the only thing that I had to go by, everybody that was there was gone. Cause a couple of the police officers that are now missing are guys that I had known, and that's where they were. The paramedic from Cabrini, that's where he was. I was just talking to him 20 minutes before everything blew up. I don't know where he ran, I don't know if he ran the wrong way, cause I know I ran the right way. If you ran the opposite way, you were dead. As I got like 15, 20 blocks away, now I'm on the West Side Highway cause I came out of this park and I found the other



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ambulance. I saw my ex-partner, and I said get in this thing and drive it to Westchester. I told him get the hell out of the city. Get everyone who can get in this, I said shit's still blowing up down there. Whatever you do, don't go in that direction, start driving north. He was like, looking at me like I was insane. Cause I don't know if anyone saw what had happened. All you could see was black smoke and that's all I can see at that point. Now I'm in an area where all the reporters are coming up to me and asking what had happened, and I said I don't think I'm allowed to talk about it. Cause I don't know what happened, and I wasn't gonna tell anybody. You know, it was surreal, like it wasn't really happening. So then an EMS Lieutenant comes over, he sees me standing with 8 Adam, and he says okay, you guys are gonna go three blocks south. I looked at him, and I said are you out of your mind? I found another guy from 8 David, Charles Gschlecht and we found each other as we were running. He couldn't find his partner, and I couldn't find mine, so we kind of synched up together, cause at least we knew each other and it's like, okay, we're okay. He said I can't find my partner. I said I can't find mine either, I think he got blown the wrong way. This guy was telling me that his partner went back in to help somebody, and that was the last we saw of either of them for awhile. That was the last I saw my partner for six whole days, cause I didn't come back to work after that.

Q: Who was the lieutenant you saw, do you know?

A: Yeah, Bobby Deleon. Bobby Deleon comes up to me, and I know him cause he used to be a union rep up in the Bronx when I worked up there a million years

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ago, he tells us to take the vehicle, put me and Charles in the back of the vehicle and go three blocks south. Charles told him, are you out of your mind? We're not safe where we are, let alone three blocks south. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, I know. Get in the ambulance and go three blocks south. At that point I got really upset. I said, do you realize they just blew up our triage sector? Everybody back there is dead, everybody back there is gone. There is no reason for us to go back there, we don't have the proper protective equipment, we don't have the proper vehicles. There's no way I'm going back there, there's no reason to go back. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, don't be hysterical, just go back three blocks south. I'm not going three blocks south, he's not going three blocks south, this ambulance is not going three blocks south. Sean started telling him we're not safe where we are now, and we were fifteen blocks away. It was certainly not safe there. He was the whole time saying...cause at that point I was screaming at him, cause he wasn't in there. We were telling him what we saw, and he just wouldn't listen. Yeah, yeah, I know.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I still  
hadn't realized that the first tower had fallen. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] After I found out what actually

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happened, cause I found that out about a week ago, that that's what I ran from. So then, I think it was an EMS chief, I'm not sure who it was. Now more people were starting to come to this location, and he says okay, here's what we're gonna do...everybody's gonna go back down that way on the West Side Highway, and it's okay cause we have a police escort.

Q: Back south?

A: Back south on the West Side Highway, it's be okay cause we have a police escort. I don't want any free-lancing, we're all gonna go back in a nice orderly fashion. At that point my chest started to hurt, I couldn't breathe cause all I was breathing in was this black crap, I started coughing up all this black crap, all this stuff that looked like goo, and if I had to run another 15 blocks, I would have been dead. There was no way I could do it. I saw Lieutenant Hanlon, who is a lieutenant out of this station at that point, and I sat in the back of the ambulance. I started getting really scared, and really upset, cause people were telling me to go back in and die. There was nothing else they were telling me to do at that point, cause that was all that was gonna happen. So I sat in the back of the ambulance, I was coughing up, I was coughing up. Everyone kept asking me do you want oxygen? I was like no, I don't want it to get pushed down, I want to bring it up. I took some cold water, I put it on my face, I tried to cough up into it, and my chest really started hurting. Then my left arm started hurting, then the whole left side of my body started hurting, and I was like no, there's no way this is gonna happen. Lieutenant Hanlon came over to me and said are you okay? I said no, and I don't

## P. ONDROVIC

know where my partner is. At that point I was crying cause I had no idea where my partner was, I thought I was having a goddamn heart attack, and these people are telling me to go back in. So then when this EMS chief said what we're gonna do I said no, I have chest pain, I want to go to the hospital. So 8 Adam took me to the hospital, they took me to St. Vincent's. At the time we were setting up, getting ready to take me out, they took my blood pressure, which was a little high at the time, it's never been before in my life, but I think that's a good time for it to be high.

Q: Did you take something?

A: They put me on oxygen, put me in the stretcher. As they put me in the stretcher, somebody came over the EMS radio, said that the North Tower is leaning. As we started driving off, we saw the second tower fall. As we're driving away, debris is hitting the back of the ambulance. We were now about 20 blocks away, debris was hitting the back of the ambulance as we were watching this thing come down, it was just this huge cloud. It was me and Jose Perez in the back of the bus saying, I can't believe we're seeing this. When we saw the towers start coming, I took the oxygen off my face, me and Jose are yelling up to the front to Joe just drive. Put your foot on the floor and drive, drive as fast as you can out of here, it's coming down. Joe was like, I know I see it, and he had his foot on the floor, which meant we were going 30 miles an hour. Stuff was still hitting the back of the ambulance. All I kept thinking of is if this much crap is hitting the back of the bus and we're 20 blocks away, this lieutenant wanted us to go 3 blocks south, and I'm thinking what happened to everybody who listened to this chief

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and went back? I don't even know if they got a chance to go back. You know? Also, after I was running, I remember running, and I remember somebody yelling on the radio May Day, May Day, I'm trapped! Over the EMS radio. I was thinking May Day? That's not a term we use, you know 10-13 or 85 forthwith, but somebody's yelling May Day, I'm trapped. Then you heard this loud buzz, and you didn't hear anymore transmissions after that until I would venture to guess it was 20 minutes to a half our later, and the first thing I remember hearing was somebody saying the North Tower is leaning. Within five minutes of that statement, the second tower came down. I spent the rest of my day at St. Vincent's hospital.

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add to this?

A: I don't know if it matters, but I took the next three days off after that. I didn't go on [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I was okay with it until the lieutenant wouldn't listen to me, and would not understand that it was dangerous to go back in. He wouldn't accept that from me or the other guy that was with me. So I took the next three days off sick. During that time I went to see two counselors, one that was set-up by the union. Cause needless to say, like everyone else in the city, I did not sleep, I was having nightmares, I think the first full meal I ate was about last week. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. Then I went to go see an internist cause I started walking down the street

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and all of a sudden, I couldn't breathe. I was trying to get back in the swing of things, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. His statements to two of my co-workers, as well

as a lieutenant was, it's part of the job. If I can't handle the job, I shouldn't have it. I

don't think what any of us responded to that day was part of anyone's job, let alone ours.

That was a military operation. Of course, what are you gonna do? It could have been my

day off. I could have been shopping at Border's Books. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I don't think anyone's ever been exposed to

something like this before here. Of course not, but we all know EMS has a high rate of

suicide. Not saying that that's gonna be my case cause no, I refuse, I wouldn't let

anybody push me to that corner.

Q: I'm glad to hear that.

## P. ONDROVIC

A: But, this is what happens. This is one of the reasons that I pushed up my resignation date a lot quicker. Cause I was trying to hold out for another 8 months, as soon I can get another job I'm the hell outta here. It's not because of this event, cause other events like this will happen whether I'm on duty or off, it's the way I've been treated since.

Q: I thank you very much for speaking to me, the time is 7:08 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110054

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DECOSTA WRIGHT

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



D. WRIGHT

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 1531 hours. I'm Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with EMT DeCosta Wright at Battalion 31.

Q. He will introduce himself now.

A. I am DeCosta Wright, EMT Wright, at Battalion 31.

Q. What unit and Battalion, are you assigned to Battalion 31, what unit?

A. I was working on 31 Adam.

Q. Tell me what you remember about the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Basically I was working in a unit. It was about 8:50 when we got the call. It came over the computer as a fire at the World Trade Center. So at first we got the call, we rushed to it and I didn't believe it at first until we got on the bridge. Then I saw it in flames. I said oh, my god. I couldn't believe it. It was unreal. Everything was so unreal.

So we just tried our best to get through traffic to get there. When we finally got there, we staged on the West Side Highway right in front of the first tower, and the building was in flames, the first

D. WRIGHT

building was in flames. Basically we took all our equipment out and ready to see how many patients there were, you know, that was on the scene. We seen all the firemen run into the building.

Q. Did you report to a Lieutenant? Do you know who it was when you first got there?

A. No, I'm not sure which Lieutenant.

Q. But you reported to a Lieutenant?

A. Yes, it was just -- basically, we were just so much in awe about the whole thing. The building continued burning. All of a sudden I seen a couple of people jumping out. But before that, some debris came down, was coming down. Large pieces of metal just flying down. If that thing would have hit anybody, that would have decapitated somebody, but it floated all the way towards us and then it went into the building next to us and broke the windows.

That was one part that I remember. After that, that's when we started seeing people starting to jump out. It was total -- that was unreal, I tell you, to see people jump from the top floor. A few minutes later, we had seen the second plane just come in, go right through the second building.

So we couldn't believe it, because we thought

D. WRIGHT

the first one was an accident. So then right after that we knew it was terrorism. So after that, after the second plane hit, it was just raining people, people were just jumping. When the first one hit, they were just jumping periodically. You would see one man jump out. I was in -- in our position, we could actually see when they hit the ground and I seen body parts just going everywhere when they hit the ground, so when one guy hit, all you hear was boom, then you see his arms and legs, just flew right off.

Then right after that I see a woman, she was just spinning in the air. After that, when the second plane hit, that's when my partner was like -- he couldn't believe my reaction, because all I was saying, all these people that was jumping out. I was just saying oh, my god, oh, my god. I couldn't believe -- I was like oh, my god. I couldn't believe. It was so unreal.

Then a few minutes later, we hear all this rumbling, sounded like an earthquake. Somebody said the building is coming down. So everybody is just screaming. We ran into the --

Q. On the map.

A. Right next to us, the Merrill Lynch

D. WRIGHT

building. Yes, we ran into the Merrill Lynch building. That building was shaking. Everybody was just screaming, and I thought that building was coming down too, because of the way it was just -- the shaking and everybody just -- so everybody thought they were going to die. Everybody actually -- I thought that was it. I thought that was the end.

So we ran into the basement of that building, everybody. Then after we -- after the rumbling stopped, we came out the building.

Q. Do you remember who ran into the building with you, who was with you when you ran into the building?

A. There was a lot of people, so many people, that's when everybody split up. I didn't see my partner. That was then. I didn't see my partner nowhere. So I walked outside and was engulfed in smoke and a lot of asbestos and stuff. I walked around, I couldn't see nothing. I wanted to see what happened. The building collapsed. So I walked to that site and it was like totally deserted. I was by myself at that time. I don't know where anybody was. It was so unreal. I walked and basically you couldn't see your hand in front of you.

D. WRIGHT

As I got closer to that site, all I heard was moaning and some people that were lying down near the site, near the rubble. They were bleeding. I seen a lot of people bleeding from the mouth, the nose, they was calling on me, help me, help me. I had no equipment, my bus is gone. My bus is covered. They was just screaming help me. There is nothing I could do for them, except for those firemen that was out there that was just walking around, I mean just in total awe and like, god, man, they didn't know where they were. They had blood everywhere but you know, they were walking wounded.

It's crazy how they were just walking around, like they didn't know where they were. I was basically at that time I was grabbing them and bringing them to safety and --

Q. Where did you bring them to?

A. There was a building. There was another staging area. We were bringing sick people, people that was injured. There was a paramedic that was under a vehicle in the rubble. I went back to the site. We got a stretcher. We ran and got him. He was alive. He wasn't injured.

Q. Do you know who he was?

D. WRIGHT

A. I forgot his name. It will come back to me.

Q. Does he work at this station?

A. Yes, he is at this station. Anyway, he was coughing. He really couldn't get his breath. He was totally covered in soot and all, and he totally breathed it in, so when we brought him to that triage area --

Q. Do you know where that triage area was?

A. I'm not sure. It was right around the corner.

Q. If you looked on the map would that help you or not really?

A. It was right there. It was this building. I think it was this building.

Q. You brought him into a building where there was triage?

A. This building.

Q. Was it the American Express building on the corner of Vesey?

A. I think it was by the water. I think it was the American Express building. Yes, it had to be.

Q. That's where you brought him?

A. Brought him in there. Then he was basically coughing. He was vomiting and after he started getting

D. WRIGHT

better, you know, he wanted to get up and he was -- so I gave him some water, oxygen, you know, he didn't want -- he just wanted to go back out there.

So after I seen that he was all right by himself, I went back out there. So the same scenario, those guys, firemen walking around the scene. You seen Lieutenants, all this big brass walking around, everybody, just in la-la land. So basically I was there, just still doing the same thing. Trying to get then to safety.

Then all of a sudden, that earthquake sound again and I knew what it was, you know. The second building was coming down. Since I heard that sound, I knew, so I started running. That's one of the things -- one of the reasons that I couldn't sleep, because there were still people there alive. I don't know if they were buried in the second one. There was people that are screaming to me. Help me, patients that was there that we couldn't do anything about.

Then we heard that second rumble and I just started running, you know. That cloud just was chasing me. Of course I got cornered. After that cleared, as a matter of fact, I ran into the same building, where we was triaging.

D. WRIGHT

After that I didn't go back there. I couldn't go back.

Q. Did you stay in the American Express building?

A. Stayed there, then I went to, as a matter of fact, the Lieutenants there, they wouldn't let anybody go back. They sent me with some patients to the hospitals. Like I said, I was split up. I didn't have a partner at that time. I didn't know how I was going to get home, you know, back to my station.

At that time that was basically it. After I went to the hospital, came back to -- there was another staging area, it was on -- it was way up on the West Side Highway. There was like a thousand ambulances.

Q. Was it the Chelsea Pier?

A. Yes.

Q. Or Pier 94?

A. Yes.

Q. Which one?

A. I'm not sure.

Q. You don't remember?

A. (inaudible).

Q. Okay.

A. There was a lot of ambulances there. I met



D. WRIGHT

up with a couple of guys from my station.

Q. Who were they? Do you remember their names?

A. There was Andre.

Q. Cherrington?

A. Cherrington, and his partner. That was the one that was in the rubble. He came back.

Q. Andre's partner that day?

A. Yes, what's his name?

Q. Suarez?

A. No.

Q. Smiley?

A. Smiley. It was me, Andre, Smiley, and who else did we have there? I don't remember who else. It was me, Andre and Smiley.

Q. Did you ever find your partner that day?

A. No.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. Jackson. Then after that, as a matter of fact, that was about 4 hours later we met up. Then we went back, me and Jackson went back. We didn't have our ambulance, that was what it was. Our ambulance was still in the rubble, so we didn't have no ambulance, so we had to split up while we were still together.

Then we went back to the site. We was on --

D. WRIGHT

we went to a different staging area. We was by -- let me see that map. We were right in front of -- what was the last building that collapsed?

Q. 7?

A. We was right there. That was building 7.

Q. You were at a triage area there or --

A. We made our own triage area. There was a couple of more ambulances, like 4 ambulances.

Q. You were in another vehicle then when you went over there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what vehicle number it was?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. So that was basically -- we watched that one come down. It was on fire first. I think the fourth floor was on fire. They said -- we were like, are you guys going to put that fire out? I was like, you know, they are going to wait for it to burn down and it collapsed. So that's when I knew high rise buildings, you know, (inaudible).

Q. Were you there when building 7 came down in the afternoon?

A. Yes.

D. WRIGHT

Q. You were still there?

A. Yes, so basically they measured out how far the building was going to come, so we knew exactly where we could stand.

Q. So they just put you in a safe area, safe enough for when that building came down?

A. 5 blocks. 5 blocks away. We still could see. Exactly right on point, the cloud just stopped right there. Then when that building was coming down, the same thing, that same rumbling. That's why I like, for a couple of weeks, every little sound that I heard. It was unreal.

Q. What time did you finally get off that day?

A. Got off, left at 11 o'clock.

Q. At night from over there?

A. Yes.

Q. And came back here?

A. 11 o'clock.

Q. Anything else you want to add or --

A. No.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes my interview with DeCosta Wright. The time is now 1550 hours.

File No. 9110056

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC GEORGE BURBANO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. BURBANO

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 11. The time is 1449 hours. My name is Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm here conducting an interview with Paramedic George Burbano in regards to the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center.

Q. Mr. Burbano, I just ask you to give me your name, rank and then tell me your story.

A. My name is George Burbano. I'm a Paramedic, Battalion 22 on Staten Island.

Q. Just feel free to tell me what happened from the beginning to the end.

A. That morning I left BHS, I left headquarters at sometime around 8:20, 8:30 in the morning. I was going into Manhattan.

Q. You weren't on duty, right?

A. I wasn't on duty initially, no. I was going into Manhattan to meet a friend of mine at the World Trade Center. We were going into midtown. I hopped on the 2 train some time around quarter to nine and within minutes after that, we went one stop to Chambers Street and they stopped the train and they asked everybody to get out of the train and we left at Chambers Street. We walked out and when I came out at Chambers Street, I

G. BURBANO

saw the one building on fire. Actually we saw mostly just smoke.

Then within -- we are watching it and I started walking down towards the Center, and then within minutes after that, I heard a second explosion. At that point I literally ran down to the Center and when I got to -- I came down Chambers Street. I came down Church.

Q. Church?

A. Yes, I came down this way, I came down Barclay Street. I came across West, came by the two buildings down Vesey Street and went in front of the Trade Center. When I came down here there was a lot of debris all around this area.

Q. That's all along Vesey Street?

A. That's right, all along Vesey Street. There was a lot of debris. There was a lot of people that were injured. There were a lot of people running away from the buildings. I went past most of those people and I went to the front of the World Trade Center.

Q. That would be on West Street?

A. That's right. I was on West Street and at the front of the World Trade Center I saw numerous fire trucks and there was already a few ambulances there. I

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found somewhere around Vesey Street and West Street I ran into Joe Cahill. I told Joe, I said, do you guys need help. I said you know I'm here. I was dressed in regular clothes. I didn't have anything on me. Joe Cahill gave me his sweat shirt that said Cahill on it, which to this day is plowed.

He said, you know, he said I need you to grab some of these guys that are coming in and see if you can set up a triage unit somewhere nearby. He said there are units set up all over the place. We have tons of patients. So myself and about 4 or 5 EMTs, I don't know any of these guys --

Q. Were they Fire Department EMTs?

A. They were no, they were our unit, EMS EMTs.

There was numerous trucks parked all along this -- like from below the pedestrians street all the way up. This way they had parked the ambulances on the left side.

Q. On West Street?

A. That's right. And then he told me to take that ambulance with a few EMTs and if I can go around to the front of the building, to the front of the Trade Center, which would probably -- he led me to believe from the map that it would have been like by 5 World Trade Center, where there were patients all along

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here.

I grabbed a couple of them. I put them in the ambulance, on to vehicle 307, which was there. I took one of them -- the guy in front of me with me in the front was -- I believe it was a new EMT. He was only on the job a few months and as soon as we pulled away, we heard a large fall of something. It looked to me like it was just like a large chunk of the Center from this side fell on top of this area.

At that point I was going to turn the vehicle around, but there was like a huge cloud of dirt and debris that was just coming to us, and I pulled away. I went up West Street with a few of the EMTs in there. As we went up West Street there was numerous EMS personnel. Of course we were all running up the street now.

When we got like somewhere around Murray Street, I ran into a supervisor there who I used to work with, actually, a couple of years ago, Marty Miller and a couple of other supervisors. There was a Chief also there, but I don't remember his name.

At that point I opened up the back of the truck. A lot of that cloud of dust had settled in and they had pulled out a police officer who was with a



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Scott packing and everything. He couldn't breathe and we put him in the back of the ambulance right there on that corner.

We met up with some St. Vincent's ambulances there also. One of the girl -- I know her by first name. I don't know her last name. Her name is Ernestine. She is a medic out of St. Vinny's. She used to work here on Staten Island with us as BLS out of St. Vincent Staten Island. Now she is a medic in Manhattan. I ran into her there and we took that cop and carried him over to the ambulance. We put him in the back of the ambulance. I started him on a treatment. The BLS crew was there.

Then within sometime after that, there was more debris that was falling. There was like another cloud, so we moved up further. We went up further with the ambulance. That police officer -- we actually got into a little bit of a verbal thing, because he wanted to go back and we told him you should not go back. He couldn't breathe. We had to literally carry him up to begin with. He started running back and then soon after that, he -- I was -- the radio -- the ambulance was open and all we heard on the radio was that the building was collapsing. The building was collapsing.

G. BURBANO

Q. You didn't happen to get a name on the police officer, did you?

A. I didn't get his name. He was one of the ESU guys. He was in his 40s. You know, we started him on a treatment and then he took off out of the ambulance and he started running down West Street and we actually followed him. I actually grabbed him. I tried to put him back in the truck and we couldn't do that. The guy couldn't breathe. Actually I saw that. That was -- they actually caught that on videotape. It was on the one of the news shows when I was there. We saw that on video.

We started sort of making our way back because a lot of that dust settled.

Q. Going back south?

A. Going back south towards the Center. There was patients that were in that area that were covered in smoke and dust and all that other stuff that was on them. There was another ambulance that was left there and it was left wide open, so I hopped on that vehicle and moved that vehicle on forward.

Q. Went north with that.

A. That's right. Went north with that, and met with them somewhere around, I guess like Warren Street,

G. BURBANO

where there is that -- a parking lot outside. Then as soon as that happened, we saw the second building go down.

At that point when the second building went down, we moved further, everybody hopped in the ambulances and we moved further -- there was a police chief who was actually running towards the Center and we actually almost tackled this guy, because he was running towards the building when that second building collapsed and we grabbed him and we put him in the ambulance with us and we ended up down by Canal Street, so we went all the way up north to Canal Street.

After the two buildings were down, we -- I took those EMTs that were with me initially. I hopped in the back of the ambulance along with a whole bunch of others. We had about 12 people in the ambulance at that point, and cut across the east side, trying to get down Church. We couldn't get down Church, so we just kept -- crossed behind City Hall over to the east side because we were told to report to the ferry terminal at that point.

We came down to the ferry terminal. At the ferry terminal I ran into some people that I knew from actually, you know, Staten Island, Mark Cohen and

G. BURBANO

Katherine Zarr, who was having trouble breathing and we started treating her at the ferry terminal. Her partner was initially missing, Mark Harris. We didn't know where he was because apparently they were like somewhere near the building when the first building started coming down. We started treating her and then for the rest of the day we just started treating people that were coming down to the ferry. That was it.

But as far as the time line goes, I know that I got on the subway sometime like around 25 to 9, somewhere around that time, and it was just a few minutes. I mean I figured I waited for the subway for a few minutes, then I got on the 2 train and then went one stop and they kicked us out.

By the time I ran down, it was when -- pretty much when I got -- I must have been a few blocks away, so I was probably like somewhere around Barclay Street when the second building got hit. I didn't see the building get hit. We just heard the building got hit. Then I came across this way and I came to -- towards the front of the World Trade Center.

I mean I saw -- when I got in front there was tons of fire units, EMS personnel, a lot of voluntary personnel were there. There was a couple of

G. BURBANO

Metropolitan ambulances that I noticed as I walked by. The EMS ambulances were parked basically from the front of the World Trade Center here all the way under the pedestrian bridge that way.

Q. So from the north tower basically going north on West Street?

A. Yes. They were all parked from the north tower right in front, because I ended up going behind what's 6 World Trade Center, which I never knew what number that was, but I ended up going behind the 6 World Trade Center, came in front of the building here where the old hotel was and that's where they had set up a lot of those command centers right there.

When that first wall collapsed, I just pulled away from there. I mean I just pulled away from there when that wall collapsed, and at that point, one of the EMTs who was with me in the front who was very upset, you know, he said, you know, should we go back, should we go back. I said we can't go back at this point. We didn't know what the damage was, but we knew that a lot of those people were probably injured or at least (inaudible), but that's basically it.

After that we made our way to the ferry terminal. I don't remember what time after that to be

G. BURBANO

honest with you. I lost complete track of time after that until 1:30, 2:00, I think it was, when I finally through to my wife. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], but that's basically it.

Q. Okay, George. Is there anything else you might want to add to this?

A. No, that's basically it.

MR. TAMBASCO: I thank you for your interview and the interview will be concluded at 1459 hours.

File No. 9110057

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC MARK HARRIS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. HARRIS

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 11, 2001.

The time is 1509 hours. I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. Conducting an interview with Paramedic Mark Harris of Battalion 22. We are in the conference room at Division 5. This interview is in reference to the events that were witnessed by Paramedic Harris on September 11, 2001.

Q. Mark, if you could, tell me your story.

A. We got sent, I don't remember the exact time when we got sent, but as we got into the tunnel, we were told -- we heard the fact that the -- there was a confirmed plane had gone into tower one and that there were people coming out of the windows and rubble and everything. As we got out of the tunnel --

Q. Who were you working with?

A. Kathy Zarr. As we got out of the tunnel, we looked -- got out -- pulled out of the tunnel and the second plane hit as we pulled out of the tunnel.

Q. You saw it hit?

A. I didn't see it, but we heard the explosion. We heard the explosion and looked up. We then were directed to -- this is North -- South End street. We were directed on down Liberty Street to South End



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Street and we parked right in Gateway Plaza right behind the World Financial Center at Au Bon Pain. Our vehicle was the second to last vehicle in the line of about 10, in the line of about 10, with the Hatzolah MERV in the corner.

Q. In like the little alcove?

A. In like the little alcove, right. Like a little alcove. There was a bank of phones right on the other side of Liberty Street that will come into play afterwards. We were advised by Chief Grant to set up a triage, a primary or secondary triage center, since we were told there was going to be one inside the Trade Center and then once that came out, the patients would be brought to us.

We were told we would be moved up to approximately the West Side Highway. We set up our equipment, we set up -- actually, we used wrought iron tables at Au Bon Pain as like a makeshift stretch of beds.

I then -- we were there about 10, 15 minutes, maybe a little more, talking. We then moved the ambulances about 10 feet further down to allow for more ambulances, since they initially parked parallel to the West Side Highway -- perpendicular to the West Side

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Highway, we made them parallel, so we could go access out North End Streets down towards any of the hospitals.

We then -- there was no patients as of yet in our sector. I, along with one or two other police officers, walked over to the West Side Highway and we were standing on the planter part of the West Side Highway -- you know there was like a planter.

Q. Like a divide?

A. The divide, right, or planter. We were watching people come down. We were watching people come down. I myself witnessed about 15 or 18 people hit the ground. I saw two firemen -- I'm going to use the word explode, but a body fell on them and they exploded along with the body. They were walking into the Trade Center. I don't know who they were, but I just know that one of them was cut in half and the other one exploded.

We took a step back, because there were parts of the building was falling, which I saw a Port Authority policeman, a few civilians killed by falling debris and also another few firemen as they were going into the building. I don't remember the names or the exact numbers, but I just remember that there was at

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least two to five people I saw actually get hit by bodies as they came down.

I then proceeded to walk back to tell Chief Grant that I think that we should, you know, that that -- what was happening over here. Chief McCracken was with them, because we were about to set up a triage center right in front of the building. I wanted to relay to them because I didn't know what was going on, but I just saw that, so I walked back and as we walked back, we were sitting there talking and we heard a sound that sounded like a plane -- like you were in the middle of a plane engine.

Everybody looked up and you said oh, no, a third one. That's how loud it was. Then we turned our eyes toward the Trade Center and we saw the top building come down. Unfortunately for me I was in the street at the time with no cover. The only coverage I had was the first ambulance. So I ran. I had my vest on, my bullet resistant vest. I ran. I dove under that ambulance and it started to get buried with rubble.

I dug myself out from underneath the ambulance and I started running towards the back of Au Bon Pain, which at least was a building between us. As

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my vest can prove, the straps across my back cut, my vest was cut into shreds in the back. It was three different places, there's rips about 4 or 5 inches from where glass went across my body in the back.

We got hit with the glass, debris, and I got knocked over and I then made my way to the side of the building, which luckily was lined up with about 100 bottles of water. I thought I was about to die, because I couldn't breathe. Debris was raining on top of me. I went under one of those wrought iron tables that we had lined, put a stretcher mat over, and I was using that as shelter. I couldn't see anybody or anything around me. I thought I was starting to suffocate because you couldn't breathe because of what was in my mouth, so I started washing my mouth out.

I then -- I had contact lenses in. I figured that there was going to be a heat blast, so I ripped my contacts out. Unfortunately underneath the contacts was cement and I cut my corneas in half. 85 percent in half. It cut my corneas almost completely in half.

The debris stopped shortly afterwards and I ran into Au Bon Pain and started pulling people out that were buried under glass. There was, I think, one or two people that were dead in there. I don't

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remember exactly. The police officer that I walked up to that he was just telling me about his vacation that he was going on in two days, he was killed.

The Hatzolah MERV was destroyed. The ambulance in front of the one in front of mine that I was on, the ambulance that I was under was damaged. The ambulance in front of that one was destroyed. I don't know whose it was. I think it may have been a Midwood ambulance was destroyed. The Hatzolah MERV was destroyed.

I then ran to try and get people out from under the debris. There was a bunch of Hatzolah people that we pulled out. I started running towards the building, pulling people out as we went. I couldn't see. We had no equipment. We had no nothing.

So the next thing we did is somebody remembered that there was down here, a couple of blocks down, was a little pier, not Liberty Park Pier, but a tiny little pier. There were buildings over here. Two blocks down.

Q. Right. Down like around Rector Street and all?

A. Right. There is a little tiny pier over here with a park. We started evacuating people down the

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street from the buildings in Battery Park City and we set up an evacuation point on to tug boats. There was an EMS Captain, I'm not going to mention names, ran away and cowered and as people will tell you, I assumed command and I said I wanted everybody's EMS name, every EMS person that was there, I wanted to set up two sectors.

We did that, we started -- we evacuated approximately 5,000 people and I even went on the Richmond frequency and -- probably still on there. I will get in trouble. I tried to tell the Citywide dispatcher. We kept on getting cut off, cut off, cut off. I went on the Richmond frequency and Moshe was the dispatcher. I told him, I said 22 Victor with a priority, 22 Victor, go ahead. I told him, we have an evacuation point set up here. We have injured personnel but we are evacuating to -- evacuating to wherever they evacuated it to. I had no idea where it was. Please advise that there is no officer here, that we just were evacuating people out of the buildings.

I then realized that all our equipment was still at the World Financial Center.

Q. Up by Au Bon Pain?

A. Right. So I got into vehicle 145 and I drove

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up the street to get the equipment. We got up there and I saw John Rothmund up there. He went to his vehicle one way. I put the equipment in my vehicle and approximately then there were about 10 firemen and policemen milling around.

Q. This was all by right by Au Bon Pain over there?

A. Right, right. Milling around. There were people buried at the phone that we pulled their bodies off the phone. That was right across the street. We pulled them out. We didn't pronounce them because it was -- then we heard that wall again, that creak again. We looked up and we saw that the radio tower started to waiver on the second building.

A fireman broke the window to 145 and they piled into the back of that vehicle and this is like the Keystone cops. Five of them, six of them in the back. Two on the bumper, one on the windshield wipers, one holding on to the mirror. We're going back down South End Street towards the only safety we knew, which was the pier.

As we are driving down here everybody in the vehicle, everybody is screaming, fucking drive, drive, drive, because behind us was the black cloud of the

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building collapsing.

Q. The second building.

A. Second building collapsing. We drove down and we had just gotten emptied out. Everybody emptied out when it hit and it knocked all of us down. I mean we were covered. I couldn't see at this time. I couldn't see at all. I had basically vision of shapes. I found my partner. She evacuated on a boat to somewhere. I then went and I drove in vehicle 145 driving around, pulling people out of from under things, I drove along.

Q. Were you going up this --

A. No, Albany. No, it was on this side.

Q. Right.

A. I went up Albany. There is a little parking garage right over here. Right over here is a parking garage with a taxi in it. I remember the cab. There is a taxi in it, or maybe one of these. We are driving up and we're pulling people out from under the highway, we're pulling firemen out, and they in turn were pulling other people out.

There was one car that was sort of blocking the door to somebody, so a bunch of us pushed the car out of the way. Then on one of these streets I saw an



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ESU Sergeant, John Engel from ESU in Brooklyn. He pulled me under a hydrant and washed me off because I was covered. I was out of it and covered and I had no idea where anybody else was. Everybody else had evacuated.

So I'm driving along the West Side Highway pulling people out, and then we made the turn. I got only as far as approximate -- about Albany Street and I walked up towards --

Q. Towards the Trade Center buildings?

A. Towards the Trade Center building and there were people in our -- I don't know if it was ambulances or if it was -- I think they were ambulances and we pulled them out. We broke a couple of windows on the ambulances. We pulled people out. We pulled people out from -- there was two unmarked people in a sedan that we pulled out. There was a lady in a wheelchair that I pulled out. I don't remember. Then I know there was a couple of other people with me but I wasn't sure who -- I know one was a fireman and one was a cop, but I don't know who exactly they were.

I then -- I was there, I would say -- I got to tell you it seemed like eternity, but I know it was only about an hour, pulling people out. I got as close

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to the building as I could to pull people out. We were then looking for Chief Grant, his aides was panicking. We sort of took her under our wing. Chief Grant we couldn't find. Chief McCracken we couldn't find. We couldn't find anybody. I had no idea where any officers were.

I got as close to the building as I could. There was just body parts and bodies all over the place. There was just -- at least 50 to 100 bodies that I saw. I mean not full bodies, I should say, but pieces of bodies. I then drove down the West Side Highway towards --

Q. Towards the ferry?

A. The ferry, and as I made the turn I saw a vehicle with a Battalion Chief and two people in there. I grabbed Ian Swords and George Orlando, because they were my partners, and we just started walking up to see if we could help people. There was nobody that could be helped at the time because everybody was buried. Everything was on fire and you just couldn't get close enough.

We then went down to the staging area. I mean they told me what I looked like the next day and they said that they got scared because I was walking

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along dazed, I couldn't find anybody. I couldn't find anybody. I had no idea where anybody was. It was like a ghost town. You are walking and there is this fog there. You are walking under this fog and you are seeing people and you are going are you okay, and they say yes and you just walking on to the next one. You are going, are you okay, yes, and I remember two people I asked are you okay. They weren't okay because they were dead.

I just remember going to the pier and staying there. They tried to send me home three times. I left at 1:30 in the morning. By that time I couldn't see. I had to have -- I was driven home by -- what's his name. I was seen at St. Vincents, where they gave me some medicine in the eyes and they said -- they diagnosed the next day at the ophthalmologist. They were 85 percent cut. Sliced through and 85 to 90 percent scratched.

Marc Cohen was there also. He was inside the ferry terminal. All I remember is not being able to see and he was going through a whole bottle of Tylenol. Probably wasn't a good idea but I went home at 1:30 in the morning. I got taken back to the hospital at 12:30, 1 o'clock in the morning, after not

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-- finally I couldn't stand the pain any more.

That's basically as far as I can remember.

Q. Did I understand you to say something that you actually saw Chief Ganci at some point?

A. Yes. In between the first and second collapse when I went back to get the equipment, we walked around and again, I can -- do you want to know the exact time.

Q. No.

A. I'm sorry, sir. I remember specifically seeing the Fire Department command center -- or command post. I remember -- again I don't want to swear to it, but from every recollection I have I remember Chief Ganci being there and him being knocked down and was (inaudible). As far as I remember. It could have been another fireman but I remember somebody saying my god, that was Ganci. I don't want to swear by it, but I know I was there.

Q. I guess on the west side over here somewhere?

A. As far as I can recall, I saw John Peruggia was talking to him and then Peruggia walked away and a couple of minutes after Peruggia walked away, I had come down. I don't remember exactly where it was, but again I don't want to swear by it, but I'm just going

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by what I saw and what somebody said to me. It was at a Fire Department, what was left of the Fire Department command post and it was a white helmet and I was told by one of the firemen, my god, that was Ganci.

Along with him, I was told that the Chaplain was also killed a few minutes before that. I didn't see him being carried or anything like that, but that (inaudible).

Q. It was debris that basically hit him?

A. I don't know. The Chaplain or Ganci?

Q. Ganci.

A. I don't know. I know something hit him. One of the people that I was with said a body hit him. One of the people said -- all I know is that when something hit him. I don't want to swear it was a body. I don't want to swear it was debris, but something hit him. So --

Q. How is your vision now?

A. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. Mark, is there anything else that you would like to add to that. Any feelings, anything that you want?

A. Nice guy, I would imagine not. You know that feeling when you are falling and you wake up right before you fall, when you are sleeping.

Q. Yes.

A. I get that every night. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I mean I don't even know where to get my

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(inaudible) vest repaired. My vest from the glass going across my back, the back of the vest is all cut in four or five places. And the cover. I had -- I cleaned out my trunk yesterday. This belt still has white stuff from the Trade Center. But that's about it.

MR. TAMBASCO: Mark, listen, I thank you for the information and for the story. We will conclude the interview at 1531 hours. Once again, thank you.

File No. 9110058

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC MARC COHEN

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis



M. COHEN

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time is 1505 hours and this is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

MR. COHEN: Paramedic Marc Cohen, Shield 2093, Battalion 22, EMS command.

MR. RADENBERG: -- of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are currently at Seaview Hospital, Battalion 22. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you'd start with where you were at the time of the first impact, the first plane.

A. My partner and I, Kenny Davis, who is also a paramedic here at EMS Battalion 22, we were in the city, probably about 7:00 o'clock. That was the primary election day and we were planning to work for Mark Green, his campaign. We were on the 59th Street bridge when out of the corner of our eye we saw the first plane hit the World Trade Center. Looking south from the 59th Street bridge, we noticed the smoke.

We immediately went to Mark Green's headquarters, which was on 42nd Street. We made a telephone call to find out what we should do. We were directed at that point to go to Metropolitan Hospital

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and secure a vehicle, which we did. We got there. We saw Lieutenant Craig Wing at the desk. He handed us keys to a vehicle, and with about five additional off-duty EMS members, I don't know their names, they were working also at the local union that day, we got on the FDR southbound. I was driving. My partner Kenny was in the front with me and we had about four or five other EMTs, paramedics, in the back. Like I said, I don't know all of their names.

The FDR was basically shut down already. There were no cars on it, so we made pretty good time. When we came over the limited sight area like right about by the Brooklyn Bridge, from what we were talking about after, we believe that both buildings were still standing, but as we passed, Tower 1 had collapsed at that point, basically while we were on the FDR, like directly in front of the building. So that kind of gives us a sense of time. Everything was kind of moving pretty fast.

We were directed by Manhattan South dispatch to go to the South Ferry terminal. We got to the South Ferry terminal prior to Building 2 collapsing. I know that because I looked up and I saw one of the Trade Center buildings was gone, but the other one was still

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standing. Supplies were starting to arrive. They were starting to organize what was going on, and I was told by a Lieutenant in uniform with a Suburban, I don't recall who it was or even what he looks like or what his command was, but they were starting to set up and that we were going to expect a lot of patients because the building had just collapsed, one building had just collapsed.

So while they were throwing stuff out, I decided that I needed to start maybe heading and setting up a forward triage area because we weren't seeing patients. We were all kind of wondering why there was nobody that we were treating. So, by myself. I ran to the corner of Battery Park City, which is kind of like where the parking area is where you would pull in to the ferry terminal if you had a car, and then I made my way around walking down towards, I guess a little bit south of where the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel is. I was figuring that there would be just patients all laid out all over the place and everybody was running. There really weren't any patients and stuff.

Then, while I was looking around, then the second World Trade Center collapsed basically while I

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was looking at it. But the wind was at my back because I was facing north, so everything was kind of just blowing the other way. I mean, stuff was all over the place, but it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. Then, of course, I started cursing and screaming and then I just ran back to the ferry terminal because I thought that patients were coming around kind of like flanking us, because the way the building collapsed, I mean, there was no way anybody could get through. There was like a huge pile of debris now on the West Side Highway.

I got there and then more EMS resources started to arrive, people that were closer to the buildings, like Dr. Cherson, Chief McCracken, Captain Frank D'Amato, Lieutenant Medjuck. We started to just organize incoming units that were there and started pulling stuff off the ambulances, back boards and fluids and IVs. Basically, a sense of time line at that point would be -- I guess it would have to be probably 11:00 o'clock by now. I mean, it was just one long -- we saw a couple of patients there, you know, critical, some with a pelvic fracture or long bone fractures and stuff, but I guess at this point -- I mean, I know at this point both of the Trade Center

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towers were down, so I guess it's about -- it would have to be probably about 11:00 o'clock now, 11:00 o'clock or 11:30.

I stayed there. I was there until 5:00 o'clock the next morning. I stayed there the whole time.

Q. Did you recognize, when you were at South Ferry, when you first got there, aside from the lieutenant, recognize anybody else that was staging down in that area at that point?

A. No. There were just so many people piling through the terminal, walking on the FDR Drive, coming -- I guess somehow they got onto the FDR Drive by the Brooklyn Bridge, the ramps, and then they came southbound on the FDR Drive. It was just hundreds, thousands. I mean, I couldn't even place a number on it. But the police started to tell them to head north, just to go, if you could walk, start walking, go north, however you can get out of here, just start walking north, and there were people starting to walk over the Brooklyn Bridge and I think a ferry took people out. Oh, yes. There were people getting on private boats also. I don't even know where these boats -- like fishing boats or private vessels and stuff from over

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there. I don't know how they were doing it, but I saw a lot of private boats with just a lot of people on it. But as far as EMS personnel, the only people that I recognized when I got there -- well, I didn't recognize him. I mean, I recognized him as an EMS lieutenant in uniform. I don't know...

No, I don't know his name. But he was the only person I recognized until I came back after the second building collapsed, after the second Trade Center collapsed, people that were coming that were close from the collapses, that I guess were closer because they were covered in debris, and even though I was relatively close, I guess, the wind being at my back, I didn't get like covered with stuff, but the first people that I recognized seeing and talking to other than the people I came with in the ambulance from Metropolitan Hospital were Chief McCracken, Dr. Cherson from OMA, Captain Frank D'Amato and Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck and...

Let me just think about it, who else was there. Nobody else, other than the people I came with, my partner, Kenny Davis.

Q. Do you remember what the vehicle number was that you got, that you picked up at Metropolitan?

M. COHEN

A. It was a three-digit number starting with 2. I don't want to say 227 because I think 227 is a vehicle here and that's why it's popping into my mind. But it was an older --

Q. It's a 2300.

A. Yes. It was a three-digit number beginning with 2 and I'm sure -- I'm almost positive Lieutenant Wing made a notation in his lieutenant's log which vehicle we took because we know each other on a personal basis. Not personal. He knows my name and I know his name and stuff. So I'm sure he made a notation in his lieutenant logbook of which vehicle he gave us.

Q. Any other thoughts that you would like to add or oddities that stand out, a little strange event or sight? Not that the whole thing wasn't.

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1516 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110059

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT VALERIE LONGO

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MR. TAMBASCO: This is Mike Tambasco with the Trade Center task force conducting an interview with EMT Valerie Longo. We are in the conference room at Division 5 in Staten Island. The start time for the interview is 1430 hours.

Q. Ms. Longo, please go right ahead and just tell us your story.

A. After the first plane hit the World Trade Center we were assigned from Staten Island to go to -- actually to go to the VZ Bridge and wait. So that's what we did. It was about ten to 9. I'm not sure exactly of the time.

Q. Who were you working with?

A. I was working with Steve Hess.

We started heading towards the bridge, and we were told to just keep going. If I'm not mistaken, they said go over the bridge and start heading towards the city.

We started heading towards the city. We were on the Gowanus. We were heading to the Battery Tunnel, and I think the second plane had already hit World Trade Center number two.

Q. The south tower?

A. The south tower.

As we came out of the Battery Tunnel we drove along West Street. Do you want to know gory details.

Q. I want to know as much as you can tell me.

A. We had to avoid hitting body parts and plane parts, because that second plane that hit or the first plane that hit left all kinds of debris. So we were driving along West Street, and they were flagging us. They told us just to go to West and Vesey.

So we finally made it up to West and Vesey, and we were told to park in front because we were 23 Henry. We parked right on Vesey and West. We were about the third ambulance up.

At that time they said for us not to do anything. There were people who were already injured. They were in a little triage center in the back of the American Express building, which is --

Q. The west side towards the river?

A. Towards the west side towards the river, there was a little triage center there,

and they were treating a couple people. There were some doctors and nurses and EMTs.

Around, I don't know, maybe 15 minutes or 20 minutes after we got there, 15 minutes, we heard a rumbling. It sounded like a freight train coming at you. All they did was say to run. So we ran down Vesey Street and ended up on North End, which is about a long block up. The first tower, whatever tower that was, number --

Q. The north tower?

A. The north tower had fallen, and we didn't know what was going on.

They gathered us all up after we caught our breath, whatever we did, and they said go get your buses. So we had to come back down. My partner came back down, got the bus, and the other guys got the buses, and met up on North End and Vesey.

They said to set up a triage in a building in that area; then they said not to. So we took our equipment back. By the time we started getting our equipment back, the north tower started to rumble and the north tower started falling. They said get your buses and

get the hell out of here.

So that's what we did. We got in the buses, and we flew up to Murray and came around to River Terrace, which is a dead end. We were stuck in front of River Terrace close to Vesey at the end, by the water. We were at Vesey by the water.

We were helping out people that were running down that way, and we waited. We didn't know what to do. We were by ourselves with our ambulance with only one other personnel; I think it was -- who was it?

Q. EMS person?

A. Yeah. He was with the LSU.

Q. I believe Hanson, maybe, Eric Hanson?

A. Yeah, Eric Hanson followed us. So it was us and Eric Hanson. We were handing out masks and water, and we just got ravaged. Everybody took everything. We were just helping people.

We stayed there for, I don't know. I can't give you time frame because we were in quite a bit of shock because we actually -- yeah, we were in quite a bit of shock.

A lieutenant found us. I'm sorry, he was a captain, Abdo.

Q. Nahmod.

A. Captain Nahmod came, and he said, "I want you to get your stuff and get up towards 23rd and the piers. He said, no matter what you do, just go uptown.

So Eric followed in the LSU, and we got in the bus and made our way uptown. We were still in very much shock. When we got up there, we stayed up there.

Q. Set up an area of staging up there?

A. No, no. What they do is they had us sit in the bus with 500 other buses, after they ravaged our ambulance, and just wait. We waited for hours. About 3:00 in the afternoon after we heard all the rescues going on, they actually released us. They told us there were 400 jobs holding in Manhattan.

Meanwhile we had debris in the ambulance. We had no equipment, and they were going to give us a job in Manhattan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I said, "We have no equipment in there."

Everybody took everything. It's full of debris.

It was ravaged.

So we ended up making our way home. We found our way home. We finally made it back to the station, and that's where we stayed. That was the end of our day. We got the crap scared out of us, and we left. As I might about a lot of other people.

It was frightening. It was absolutely the most frightening thing that I've ever experienced in my whole life. Me and my partner, I think we were white, we were so scared. I couldn't run. He had to practically grab me by my belt and carry me, because either I was too scared -- I have a bad ankle. That was it.

So that was the end of our harrowing experience. We didn't get hurt. We didn't get injured. We tried to help people, but they sent us uptown. That was the end of our day.

Q. Okay.

A. That's my story.

Q. Anything else you can think of you would like to add to it?

A. Yeah. The next time something like this happens, tell people not to stand in front of the goddamn building. Okay? First of all, they were getting killed by debris. A plane hits a building, and where do you stand? Where do you park your vehicles? Underneath it? I don't think so. That was wrong from the get-go.

Do I have the right to say that?

Q. You can say whatever you want.

A. Well, wrong, wrong, wrong. I'm serious. I'm serious. If they had thought to even try to park half a block away or a block away or somewhere where you can walk to get access or something. A lot of these people probably wouldn't have gotten killed if they -- they were hit by flying debris. You don't park under something that's burning.

Q. This is the kind of stuff you were seeing?

A. Oh, yeah, yeah. You look up, and it's

two towers of flames. Now, we had a hard time seeing people jumping out because we were on that one side. We didn't see this building here.

Q. The south building. Right.

A. We saw the top of it but not the bottom half. We saw this one, because we were right here.

Q. Right.

A. So we saw the top half.

Q. You saw the top of the north tower.

A. Yeah. We actually saw it from an angle as we were looking up. Then the rumbling just took us for a loop, and then we ran. That's when everybody got covered with soot and debris and dust and everything else, not able to breathe.

But I credit the lieutenant or the captain that was there -- god knows I can't remember his name; I have no idea who he was -- when he told us to run that way, towards the water. I credit him, because that was the way to go. I don't know who he was, and they just said run that way. Instead of running east or west, we ran south, if I'm not mistaken.

Q. I guess actually west instead of south



or north.

A. Yes. Wherever the water was, that's where he made us run to. Instead of running this way or this way, which was --

Q. That's north. Instead of running north or south, they sent you west towards the water?

A. They sent us towards the water, which was a godsend. Whoever it is, I credit them. I have no idea. I have no idea. But I'm glad they did.

That's it.

Q. Okay. Well, I thank you for your story.

A. Quick and to the point.

Q. That's it.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview will conclude at 1439 hours.

File No. 9110060

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT STEPHEN HESS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

S. HESS

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 11, 2001. The time is 1433 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Stephen Hess. Shield 5612 EMT, assigned to 23 Henry.

Q. We are currently at Seaview Hospital, Battalion 52, EMS. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Start with when you were assigned.

A. All right. We first heard the first call after the first incident occurred, and our initial response was to that it was a small plane, a Cessna, lost power and hit the tower. Then they said it was a commercial airline. That happened at 848. We were assigned to the job at approximately 8:50. We were told initially to go to the Verrazano Bridge and stage there. Then it was to 92 Street in Brooklyn. Then to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and in the process they just kept saying, finally just said go to -- through the tunnel to Vesey and West Street.

We got there I would say approximately 20 minutes after we got the job. We came after the second

S. HESS

tower was hit, because we came over the Gowanus and we could see them both burning just before the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. I know we were following lots of PD, fire apparatus, came through the tunnel, and our initial response was seeing body parts and airplane parts all over the west side. Just traumatic to see.

We got to approximately West and Vesey, where Lieutenant Brad Mann took our unit designation and since we were HAZTAC, he staged us pretty close to the corner of West and Vesey. I think there was maybe two or three ambulances closer to West than us. We were helping the triage, we were instructed we wouldn't be transporting because of us being HAZTAC. They wanted us to remain there.

We were helping out and then approximately, according to the time sheet, 9:55 we heard this loud rumbling noise, looked up and saw the building coming down. Everyone started yelling, run, run, run, so we started running up Vesey towards the Hudson River. I knew I was running fast and the thing that caused me some problems was turning around and seeing my partner saying please don't leave me.

So basically, I grabbed her by the belt and picked her up is what she tells me. I don't remember.

S. HESS

But we basically ran down the street. Got to North End Avenue, ducked around the corner and saw the cloud of dust coming around. You know, saying this can't be really happening.

Just after the first tower came down, we were standing there and I don't recall his name but some Captain from EMS said we need to get the ambulances. So I turned to my partner who was standing there and told her you stay right here. Don't move, because I ran back to get our bus and was able to get on it, I was covered in some debris and dust, but I knew we needed our -- the equipment we have, the decon and stuff like that.

We were treating some patients who came around the corner. Irrigating their eyes, trying to get the dust off as best as we could, when all of a sudden we heard later on the noise of the second tower going. We jumped in the bus and started driving away. We wound up near the Hudson River, near the park over here. We kind of got trapped in a loop because there was so much debris and vehicles that we couldn't get out of there. Our thoughts are like where do we go from here. We were like, we are going in the water if we have to. They started bringing the boats and then

S. HESS

the debris cleared up and we were able to get out and they restaged us at Chelsea Piers.

I'm guessing that was somewhere around 11 o'clock. To be honest I'm not exactly sure when. Yes, because we were stuck down, it was 10:29, the north tower went down and we were stuck in that street for a good half an hour, 45 minutes, it might have been even later.

We came out of -- down Murray Street, I remember that, and we looked back and just saw this blank hole in the sky with what used to be the World Trade Center with smoke billowing up and people covered in dust and debris. Like I said, the next thing we restaged up there and we were treating some patients up there, but we didn't do any transports.

After that, I think it was around 3:00 we were released from the scene. We came back to Battalion 22 in Staten Island. As far as seeing people, like I said, I knew Lieutenant Mann, because he was in my old station. The Captain I really never caught his name because he was telling us what to do. I saw some medics that I knew, like Darnowski, a couple of other people that I knew. Ray Viscutti, he used to work for EMS, but now he works for a volunteer.

S. HESS

People running for their lives. Running just trying to get away. I saw another guy from our station, Eric Hansen. We wound up on River Terrace with him. Caught in that loop. Beyond that, that's about what I remember.

The thing that stuck with me was turning around and seeing my partner.

Q. Right.

A. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] but I was not going to leave her by herself. She told me I came back, that I picked her up and basically ran with her like a football to get out of there, you know. Something I will never forget. Something that really bothered me -- getting all the beeps on your pager from your parents, your wife. You can't even call them.

I still think about it. Sometimes it's difficult to deal with but it's getting better.

Q. When you were over here on the first --

A. West and Vesey.

Q. West and Vesey. When you were over there, the patients that you were treating were all at that point were all coming up on their own?

A. We walked into a staging area on West and

S. HESS

Vesey and there was about 30 people already there.

Q. Patients?

A. Yes. We were kind of kept to the side because of being HAZTAC, they wanted us available near our unit.

Q. Right, right.

A. Then it became so overwhelming that we moved over a little to help people, do what we could. We got some burn victims that you could see and people with respiratory problems. That's about the point when the building came down and my back was to it. I heard the noise. I turned around and it looked like I was looking at a movie. It was like surrealistic.

I can still vividly see the debris coming down and starting running. The noise is -- I thought it was another plane actually, because the noise was so deafening loud, from everything coming down. That's what we covered and encountered that day.

Q. You said Darnowski and Canton were there?

A. No, Viscutti. He was in my academy class but he left and he works for Lenox Hill I believe.

Q. Okay.

A. But I remember Darnowski because they are twins. There is Jimmy and Kevin and I saw both of



S. HESS

them, but I don't remember which is which at this point.

Q. Okay.

A. The one that I saw initially was saying that he just dropped his girl off and she was up in the towers. Then I remember like I said, helping with triage and then the building coming down, and just running as fast as I could because we didn't know if they were toppling over or coming straight down. I figured if they are toppling over, it's all over.

Q. Do you remember once you came out of the Battery Tunnel, which way you came up to?

A. We came out of the Battery Tunnel. We came out on to the west side and came up straight up the West Side Highway, coming between the World Trade Center and the financial district. Like I said we turned the corner on Vesey and Lieutenant Mann told us -- ask us our designation and we told him 23 Henry. He says full HAZTAC? We said yes. He staged us right on the corner of West and Vesey.

Like I said, maybe two and three ambulances up from the corner to be available. He said try to assist with some triage and patient care, but don't transport because we need you.

S. HESS

Q. Do you remember any other, aside from Lieutenant Mann and the Captain, any other EMS officers that you remember being there?

A. Just later on. Not at that point, I saw Lieutenant Mann and the Captain -- for the life of me I can't remember his name, you know. But I remember what he looks like. I remember that. I will never forget.

Q. Did you ever run into him before?

A. Never seen him before. I don't know him, wouldn't know wouldn't have known him from Adam that day, except for the fact that he had his shirt on, with two bars. He was -- him and Lieutenant Mann were the ones setting up staging, positioning the busses. Turned out not to be the best spot afterwards, but who knew these buildings were going to come down. No one expected that.

Q. Right, right. Darnowski, that's who you saw there initially, he was off duty?

A. Yes, I'm assuming he was. He was in uniform. He might have been going to work or coming home. But he said he dropped his girl off at work.

Q. He wasn't part of a crew that you know of?

A. No, not that I can recall.

Q. Okay.

S. HESS

A. You know, I just, like I said the only reason I remember him is because we knew each other. I saw a lot of people that I had never seen before in my life, might not ever seen again. Hopefully they all got out of there, you know. That's about the best as I can remember what was going on.

Q. Do you remember any vehicle numbers that were parked; EMS vehicle numbers that were parked around you at that point or --

A. You know what.

Q. Did you recognize people from other stations maybe?

A. No. Like I said, we are from Staten Island. They don't get too much contact with people in Manhattan. Initially most of the units were Manhattan units. I mean a few of the faces I kind of recollect seeing at the Academy at some point in time, but as to the names, vehicle numbers, I wasn't even looking.

Q. Okay. No problem. Different people remember different things.

A [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

S. HESS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No, nothing.

Q. Thoughts or opinions?

A. I would just like to know how a plane can disappear from the radar for 40 minutes, and no one does anything. I don't think it would have prevented anything, but it might have prevented -- I mean, what time did the Pentagon get hit? I think that was later. Someone might have been alerted to something that was going on but, you know, too little too late I guess.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1447.

Interview is concluded.

File No. 9110061

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ABDO NAHMOD

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. TAMBASCO: It is October 11. The time is 12:37. I'm Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview into the events of September 11, at the World Trade Center. Today I'll be interviewing --

CAPTAIN NAHMOD: Captain ABDO NAHMOD.

BY MR. TAMBASCO:

Q. Where were you assigned that day, Captain?

A. Operations.

Q. If you'd be good enough to just try to tell us what you saw, what you did. Go right ahead.

A. On that given morning, I was assigned to the office of operations, and I was spending some time with Lieutenant Mann, who was taking over the medical data base for operations, and we were on the 7th Floor when somebody up there said that the World Trade Center was just hit by a plane.

At this point, we went to the window. We looked and, sure enough, we saw visible flames coming from the top of the World Trade Center.

Many people began to respond in different vehicles, and at one point, I responded with EMT Richard Zarrillo, the special events coordinator, with Mr. Drury from BITS in his vehicle to get down to the

ABDO NAHMOD

World Trade Center.

At this point, I communicated with Chief Peruggia via the land line, and we were directed to report to 7 World Trade to set up OEM. Both myself and EMT Zarrillo went to the 23rd Floor of 7 World Trade and began to log onto the terminals, as well as inform the citywide dispatch supervisor that we were activating OEM at this time, and operations were to begin.

Moments thereafter, we were advised by the staff at OEM that we were to vacate the building, that they believed there was another possible plane on its way, and proceeded down the stairwell of 7 World Trade all the way down to the ground floor.

Upon getting outside to 7 World Trade, I saw Chief Peruggia and Captain Stone, and I believe one of the EMTs from the Division 1 command outside.

At this point, we were trying to establish a command center, as well as treatment and transport sector. I believe Chief Peruggia was trying to establish communication, and I was directed to move down to the garage area of the 7 World Trade where there were four bays, one having a truck in it and three that were open, and at that point, I believe

ABDO NAHMOD

there were some EMTs and one medic unit in front of 7 World Trade building.

At this point, we tried to gather all our equipment, gather some equipment from 7 World Trade, set up a treatment area at the bottom, and we were met by one of the doctors from OMA. I don't recall his name at this point.

Q. Did you happen to recognize any of the guys that were in the ambulances, either the medics or the EMTs?

A. No, I never worked Manhattan, and I really don't know. I know a few were from St. Clare's, and one was from New York Hospital, and a few were municipal units, but I didn't recognize any of the folks there.

I'd say within 20 minutes to a half an hour of being down there or trying to set everything up, all of a sudden a loud noise, rubble, and sand, and dust -- everything just started toppling down.

We did have one patient there that walked in for an eye injury, an older gentleman. He was sitting by the loading dock, and I was right next to him. Also, when this started happening, everybody started going to the main lobby.



ABDO NAHMOD

At this point, I tried to cover this gentleman up with myself and then remained in the loading dock curled up in the corner.

Time passed. Couldn't tell you if it was five minutes or 50 minutes, but everything seemed dark, everything seemed black, and there were lots of sand, and rubble, and grit, and dirt and debris on top of myself and this gentleman.

When everything cleared, I believe I saw Commissioner Tierney walking out of 7 after that, and everybody that we saw was accounted for that was there initially, as far as the providers. We tried to assist this gentleman onto a stretcher of the St. Clare's unit. We put him on the stretcher and started wheeling him northbound. I believe we were originally on Vesey, probably turned up West, and we went with this gentleman up West.

Q. North on West?

A. North on West, and I believe their ambulance was a block or two blocks away. I assume they put him in the ambulance and went on from there.

Shortly after that, I was proceeding north on West Street, and then I heard another loud noise and looked behind, and, sure enough, it looked like the

ABDO NAHMOD

building was coming down. By then I managed to get to Stuyvesant High School and huddled in the doorway with a number of ESU cops and firefighters, and once again, the dust, and the debris and everything else came down, and shortly thereafter we started to look around for anybody that was hurt.

We started going back towards the collapse site. We did manage to see a FDNY EMS command car with the windows broken, but the radio still working and running, I believe on West and Chambers. There I believe I saw, once again, Chief Peruggia and Chief Butler, and a number of other people starting to gather.

We started to try to establish some kind of communication, but the radios weren't functioning all that well. We stayed at that point until we managed to set up a treatment sector, and so on and so forth, but in the interim, I remember seeing Chief Carasquillo up by River Street and Chambers. I did wander that way and then made it back towards West and Chambers. I think West and Chambers might have happened after I saw Chief Carasquillo.

I did see Eric Hanson with the LSU by the river and Chambers, as well a number of other units

ABDO NAHMOD

there.

From there, resources started to come in. Radios started to work. We managed to locate the MERV driver who was on Chambers Street and West Street -- and River Street and managed to pull the MERV down. Then we began to set up different sectors, so on and so forth.

I spent a good portion of the afternoon with the MERV, the latter part of that evening with the communications sector, and went home, I think, two days later or a day and a half later, and then came back on something like Thursday.

That's it.

Q. Anything else you want to do add into it? Any feelings about it? Anything at all?

A. The only thing is I'm lucky to be alive. That's really the bottom line.

If the building went the other way, I was standing across the street, you know. You don't know the outcome, so that's it.

MR. TAMBASCO: In that case, thank you for the interview. This is interview will be concluded at 1246 hours.

File No. 9110062

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DR. GLENN ASAEDA

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

G. ASAEDA

MR. McALLISTER: This is Kevin McALLISTER from the Bureau of Administration. It's October 11th, 2001. We're in the south conference room at Fire Department Headquarters. It is 1536 hours and I am joined by...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Assistant Commissioner Jim Drury.

MR. McALLISTER: And...

DR. ASAEDA: Glenn Asaeda, M.D., Deputy Medical Director with the Fire Department Medical Affairs.

Q. DR. ASAEDA, I'd like to draw your attention to September the 11th, 2001, and get your recollections of that day, if we could.

A. Yes. I was actually one of the physicians for the Office of Medical Affairs that was coming on duty as the on-call medical director for the system and was actually headed to Manhattan for an unrelated sexual assault task force meeting. I was actually on the Long Island Expressway going towards the Midtown Tunnel when I happened to look over to my left and actually did see one of the towers, what appeared to look like one of the top floors kind of smoking, but from my angle, there were four smokestacks, I guess on

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the Brooklyn side or the Manhattan side, just in front of the towers, to a point where it looked like it was actually smoke from the smokestacks, and I thought at that point, wow, that's interesting, it really makes the tower look like it's on fire.

I had just taken a bioterrorism course that the Fire Department had offered, I think a month or two months before downstairs, and at that time the instructor from the federal government had said, do you know how to tell if it's a good day for bioterrorism? We had not known and they had explained to us that by looking at the smoke from the smokestack you can tell. If it rises straight into the air and dissipates, it's a bad day for bioterrorism, good for the people because what happens is anything released would go into the air, we wouldn't breathe it in. A good day for bioterrorism but bad for citizens would be a day where the smoke seems to kind of hover, even come to the ground, anything released could actually be inhaled. So, as I looked at that, I thought, oh, potentially this is a good day for bioterrorism. I was just thinking that off the top of my head.

Then, as I was in traffic, I saw the car next to me honking, flashing its lights, and often in a

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marked car I get that. Can you tell me how to get to Bellevue Hospital? Can you tell me where the corner of this and that is? So I didn't think much of it. I rolled down the window only to hear the driver say, did you see the plane hit the World Trade Center? At that point I realized it was a real situation, looked back at the tower and thought, oh, my God, and for some reason I felt why is the Citywide radio so quiet? I didn't come to realize that, when I actually stopped for coffee initially, I had forgotten to put the Citywide back on. On my car it just doesn't automatically go on.

Almost afraid to push the Citywide button, I pressed it, got the radio to go on and it came to life, and I hear the first thing, confirmed aircraft into the World Trade Center tower, send me everything you've got, and this is hard hat operation. As soon as I heard that, I actually got on the cell phone with Commissioner Claire.

Q. Do you think that was the first or the second plane that had hit?

A. That was the first plane.

Q. Okay.

A. At that point, realizing that Commissioner

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Claire was actually in Albany for a state EMS meeting, I actually dug into my bag, got his cell phone number, just to let him know, called him on the cell phone, and at that point I was told, I'm watching it, I'm seeing it on TV right now. Do me a favor and when you get in on scene, give me another report. So I said okay, I acknowledged that and started to roll in. At that point, also, as I'm rolling, I called my wife just to let her know that the plane had hit the tower, I'm going to go in, just watch it on the news.

Probably about three minutes from the tunnel, I ducked into the tunnel with traffic with the lights and siren, and at that point didn't realize until later that communications was lost for me. I didn't know about the second aircraft. I think I had 1010 WINS on trying to hear the news. In the tunnel, I didn't hear any of that as well. I just remember, when I popped out of the tunnel, that my adrenaline was so pumped, I thought to myself, you've got to calm down, you've got to relax a little bit and just concentrate on doing what you have to do.

As I popped out of the tunnel, emergency vehicles, marked and unmarked, from every aspect, just in front of me, to the side of me, behind me, and I



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realized that this is something I need to really be careful as to how I'm driving because we're not usually accustomed to so many vehicles going in one place.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Excuse me.

Doctor, you said the tunnel. Which tunnel?

DR. ASAEDA: The Midtown Tunnel.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Okay.

A. At this point almost a convoy of emergency vehicles were going towards the World Trade Center. Since I was on the east side, I continued all the way down. As soon as I got towards the Brooklyn Bridge, I could see more closely the smoke and just thousands of people were just kind of running, walking towards the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. Were both of the buildings standing at that point in time?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. Okay.

A. Again, still I had not realized about the second plane hitting the tower. Also, because of the bioterrorism course and just the threats, I'm thinking to myself, I had just imagined that it was a single engine Cessna type of plane, not knowing it was a commercial airlines by any means. I kept thinking also

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to myself, be careful, it still could be terrorism, it could be bioterrorism, they could have had some kind of chemicals and biological agents on board. I kept thinking don't go downwind, don't go downwind. But because of the flow of people, the direction that I was hoping to take ended up putting me further south, which actually put me directly downwind, and I remember thinking to myself, oh, my God, this is where I don't want to be. I turned off the air-conditioner, holding my breath, as if that would work, thinking do you know what? You're in the worst place.

As I rounded the corner, more emergency vehicles now on the West Side Highway trying to get north towards the towers, the next car that I saw coming next to me was Chief Downey's vehicle.

Q. So you drove all the way south down the east side and looped around --

A. Correct.

Q. -- at the Battery and headed up West Street?

A. Correct. Because there were too many people coming directly east. I knew that I couldn't go that way. So as I rounded the bend by the ferry, got back onto the west side, the next unmarked car that I saw was Chief Downey. Now, I don't think he was driving

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because I don't think I could have seen him that clearly, but I remember that he looked in towards the window of my vehicle, he smiled and actually waved, and I actually remember saying verbally, hey, chief, knowing that he couldn't hear me. But I particularly remember Chief Downey because I've had the opportunity of going on FEMA deployments with him to the Dominican Republic and joining him when the Japanese firefighters had come by, they wanted to speak to the S.O.C. chief and whatnot. So he was I remember physically one of the last people that I had known recognizing going to the scene.

As the first convoy had gone in front of me, I actually diverted my vehicle to two ambulances that I had seen right under the south walkway bridge. I saw two ambulances, Fire Department ambulances, pulled up next to them and said--

Q. That's the south bridge that crosses the West Side Highway?

A. Correct. The one that's still intact.

Q. Right?

A. Or was still intact. At that point, I pulled up next to the ambulances. I asked them, is this the command post? They said no, it wasn't. I said, who

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set you up here? I believe they were EMTs. I don't think they were medics. They had said, there's so many people running this way, we felt this was a good area to be in. I said, it sounds good, just make sure to let a lieutenant know where you are so he can account for everyone, and I asked them, do you happen to know where the command post is? They directed me to in front of 1 World Trade Center on the West Side Highway.

Also, at this point I noticed just women's shoes all over. I guess they had taken them off to run. I guess they couldn't run in the heels and whatnot.

Q. That was on West Street?

A. That was on West Street and even previously, coming around from the east side to the west side, just shoes all over, it was just interesting to see that, along with the debris.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: If I may interrupt.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: You were directed to the command center on West Street across from 1 World Trade?

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DR. ASAEDA: Correct.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Did you in fact reach that command post?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes, I did.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Was that in front of the World Financial Center?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes, it was.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Okay.

A. So as I pulled my vehicle, I realized that the West Side Highway had a lot of emergency vehicles. I couldn't actually get onto that. I went up the service road the wrong way with just the lights on, no siren at this point, saw the people gathering, I would say, 30 to 40 feet in front of the stairs of the World Financial Center. I think they call it the American -- I don't know if that's the same as the American Express Building or whatnot.

Q. No. 3 World Financial?

A. I would guess it would be 2, but I'm not sure of the number.

Q. The American Express Building?

A. Yes, the World Financial. I remember parking my car on Vesey and West on the corner, it was the northwest corner. There were emergency vehicles there

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as well. I was on the end double-parked and I thought to myself, I don't want to block anyone. Again, not realizing the magnitude of what was about to happen, I thought to myself, I still have a meeting to go to in about half an hour, so once I figure out what's going on here and everything settles, I still need to be able to pull my vehicle to go to the meeting. So I parked my vehicle, remembered that it was a hard hat operation, grabbed my helmet, grabbed my jacket and proceeded to the command post.

While I was en route to the site, I actually remember hearing the other physician's vehicle designation arrive on scene, so I knew that he was on scene probably about five to seven minutes before I had arrived.

Q. Who was that?

A. That was Dr. Cherson.

Q. Okay.

A. So I made it a point to, once reporting to the command post just to find out what was going on, to see if I could find the other physician as well. Since he was the previous physician on call and first on the scene, I figured I would let him take the lead and let him direct me as to where he wanted me to go.

G. ASAEDA

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: At what time was it now, do you know, doctor, approximately?

DR. ASAEDA: This must have been, I would say -- it turns out it was after the second aircraft had crashed but before the first building. I don't remember the exact time of the second plane, but 9:10, 9:15, somewhere in that time frame.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Yes.

A. But even at this point, I still didn't realize that a plane had hit. Again, being so close and looking up, I couldn't even see the other building really from where I was standing. I walked over to the command post. At that point I remember seeing a piece of debris fall from the north tower, literally past us, and hit the World Financial Center behind us and come down, and the only reason I saw that is everyone was kind of looking up going, whoa! I kind of looked up and I thought, wow, this is very close.

By the same token, I had looked up at the same time and noticed what I thought was debris turning out to be people, and at first I just couldn't imagine it would be people, but as they landed I was pretty sure it was people. I thought, well, they must be unconscious or falling out. Upon looking closer, there

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were some people that seemed to be on fire coming down, some that looked like rag dolls coming down, but at least 70 percent of them actually flailed until they hit the ground and one, I mean, they looked like ants from the distance we were at, but actually looking like he or she wanted to get to the next window.

I remember thinking under my breath and saying out loud that I could hear myself, I go, oh, my God, please, no, no, no, no, and they were jumping. I've seen people, you know, I've worked as a paramedic in the past in California, so I've seen people jump as high as 25 stories, but that was very different in that in that it was just kind of, oh, my gosh, and they hit. Here, with four times the height, it was kind of an oh, my God, oh, my God, oh, my God, until they finally hit.

At that point I had met Dr. Cherson and the paramedic aide that was with him, Paramedic Delgado from our office as well.

Q. Is this at the command post?

A. This is at the command post, initially across the street from World Trade Center.

Q. Who else was at the command post at this time?



G. ASAEDA

A. I remember seeing Chief Ganci. I also remember Chief Downey speaking to Commissioner Von Essen walking in front of me. Also, at about this time Mayor Giuliani and his entourage had actually walked behind us, and then a couple of fire chiefs that I had seen from the training or whatnot, but I couldn't recall their names, some of the Dominican Republic staff as well that had been sent.

Q. Was Commissioner Feehan there?

A. I had briefly seen him, but I can't remember exactly where I had seen him.

Q. Okay.

A. At this point, as I was standing in front of the command post looking to try to take in what was going on, Dr. Cherson came back to me and said that they were going to move the command post into the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. So at that time he said to me he was going to go in there with Paramedic Delgado, Manny Delgado, and he wanted me to take the EMS fellow who was with us and go to 7 World Trade, where they had set up one of the first treatment areas.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Now, was this going to be the EMS command post or the Fire Department command post?

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DR. ASAEDA: This was going to be an EMS treatment area.

A. So I agreed to it, and one of the -- I can't remember who it was but he actually brought over one of the antidote kits from one of our vehicles. I almost chuckled at that time thinking, even if it were, one kit is not enough for all the potential patients, but we brought it with us. We went into the loading dock of 7 World Trade, which was right adjacent to the telephone company building, I believe, on Vesey.

Q. Right.

A. I remember as we were walking there was smoke coming from the World Trade Center and what seemed to be in front parts of -- in retrospect, I guess it was parts of the plane or whatnot, debris from the plane, debris from the building, and I had also heard that there were people around, but I didn't get a close enough look to see what kind of status they were in.

We walked into the loading dock where Captain Abdo of the Fire Department, EMS, had already established a treatment area, and we were using the START system, which is the simple triage and rapid transport, where we color code our victims into red for immediate, yellow for injury but not immediate, green

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for walking wounded and black for dead at this point, and he had set up the loading dock into these separate areas and there were a few patients there as well. I remember, again, walking towards the treatment area thinking this is awfully close, we need to work on getting it a little bit further out, and I started seeing a few patients that were there.

The first gentleman for some reason I remember particularly. He was a gentleman in his seventies. He had said that he was on the 59th floor of the first tower that got struck. He was actually ordering some kind of food at that cafeteria, I think it's at the 59th floor, I'm pretty sure, and thought that, when he heard the explosion, that it was the kitchen oven. He heard that other people said they don't know what it is but it's time to evacuate, so he actually came down the staircase, and he was just sitting there because he was tired he was in the. So green category of a walking wounded. I remember thinking to myself, if he was able to make it out, then it sounds like most people are going to be able to get out, and I was relieved to hear that.

As I went to another patient, I remember a Secret Service or security from 7 World Trade Center

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person saying to me, did you hear that the Pentagon just got hit by another plane? Again, not knowing about the second plane still at this point, I thought, oh, my God. Then he said, and there's another plane missing. So at that point was the first point that I realized that this was a terrorist -- an intentional act, again, not knowing that the second plane had already hit.

So I thought we really need to move this out because I had a feeling they were going to come back for us. Just as soon as I had thought that, I heard what I thought was a jet engine plane. In retrospect, it turns out that it was the first tower coming down. We grabbed whatever patients we could, and what I did was I turned to my left and ducked into the little -- there was, I guess, a little connection between the lobby of 7 and the loading dock. The loading dock, I do remember thinking that it looked very secure, thick concrete and whatnot, and we all crammed, probably about 30 of us, into this little alcove between the lobby and the loading dock.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. [REDACTED] and the next thing I

noticed, that jet engine sound and then a loud crash  
and then pitch black. Then --

Q. Just prior to that, were there electrical  
lights where you were?

A. Yes, there were.

Q. Did they stay on?

A. No, they did not.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember thinking that this was it for me.  
I really thought that this was another plane coming and  
I thought this was it. I remember putting the visor of  
my helmet down, grabbing the chin strap and just kind  
of squatting where I was at. After I realized that we  
actually made it through this initial whatever it was,

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it was so dark that I actually thought they had closed the loading bay doors as a security measure for us, but it turns out it was just the debris and the smoke and whatnot that made it pitch black.

Q. The doors were still open?

A. They were still open.

Q. Okay.

A. I've heard in the past that, you know, these disasters are so dark that people put their hands in front of their face and couldn't see anything. I used to laugh at them and think how dark can that be? But really, it was so dark, you couldn't see the hand in front of your face. At that point we realized that the building we were in was still up, we needed to get out, but just didn't know where to go, a little disoriented. Any lighting equipment, which I actually didn't have, but any of the EMTs, I would say there were about eight of us, eight EMTs and medics, as well as the Captain and myself, EMS, we realized that we needed to get out, but none of us -- they hadn't brought their flashlights to the area we just dove into. We didn't know which way to go. People were yelling, I can't breathe, I can't breathe, and I remember from the bioterrorism course thinking, again,

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it could be bioterrorism, that they had said that even if you didn't have a mask, just take your tie and put it on your face, that seems to eliminate 80 percent of what may be around you. I remember thinking, they said this would work, they said this would work, and tried to breathe through this, but still everything in my mouth and whatnot.

Now, trying to make the escape out, I didn't know which way to go. Someone yelled, I think it's this way, and somebody had a camera, whether it was a photographer or whatnot, and I remember the person was flashing his camera towards us saying come towards the flash. So we made it to the flash, still pitch black, by chance met up with Captain Abdo from EMS, and I said, are all of our EMS people accounted for? He said, yes, they are. I said, then we need to get out of here. Then I said, oh, and we've got to get the patients, because at this point it was kind of, you know, we've got to get the patients as well, grabbed whoever we could. Luckily, they were for the most part all walking wounded, and even the ones that were lying were at this point up and had ducked with us.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Let me stop you there, Doctor.

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DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: You said there were about 30 people you crammed into this little alcove or pathway from the loading area to the lobby of 7 World Trade.

DR. ASAEDA: Correct.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Did you know any of those other people?

DR. ASAEDA: Just the EMS personnel. I didn't recognize any of the Fire side personnel. Also I recognized one of the security personnel from 7 World Trade just because I used to go there weekly for the Mayor's PAD, public access defibrillation meeting. I recognized him. I also recognized the person who said he was either Secret Service or security, not as knowing him but just as he was next to me when we dove for cover, and then the patients who we had brought with us. But other than that, I didn't recognize any other personnel.

A. At that point, we got to the exit, made a decision to evacuate, got the patients, still not knowing which way to go because we really hadn't been able to determine what actually came down or what had happened. The decision was either to go left or right



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and we ended up going right, between the two buildings, in the alleyway on the north, which turned out to be the right direction because apparently there was a lot of debris and part of 7 down already. Also, I did notice as I was making my exit the sound of the firefighters' alarms indicating that they were down. I did remember that as well but just could not see anything.

As we got into the alleyway, it just started to get a little bit lighter, almost like a dusk/dawn type of deal. We got through the alleyway, got half a block up -- I don't even remember which block that was, but saw one of the first ambulances, I think it was a Cabrini ambulance, one of the voluntary hospital ambulances with people just crammed on board. I made the decision to remove them because they were not hurt. I said, we have patients that are hurt. We loaded three or four and I remember just hitting the side of the ambulance and saying, go, go, go, go, and the driver, the EMT or medic, shouted back or looked back, where are we supposed to go? I said, just go north, just go north. So they took off.

I saw another ambulance. At this point, also, I saw people from OEM. Eddie Gabriel, who is one

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of our EMS chiefs, was over there coming in with -- I think he had somebody on his arm. We saw police officers. There were some firefighters now in gear but not recognizable because of the dust. I didn't remember any identifying markers on them either.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Where was this now, Doctor? On West Street?

DR. ASAEDA: This is actually on -- let's see. This was West. This was Vesey. We took the little alleyway between the telephone building and 7 World Trade, ended up on the next block.

Q. Park Place? Murray?

A. It may have been Murray. There was a parking lot adjacent to it. It was a smaller street. I think may have been Park Place.

Q. Yes, I think so, too.

A. Then at that point I saw some of the OEM people that I recognized, just happy to see that they were okay. I got to the next ambulance, put people on board. At that point my beeper was going off. It just seemed to be the only thing that was actually going off. It turned out to be my wife calling because she had heard that I was going, and while I'm trying to coordinate everybody going, I actually picked up the

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phone and tried to dial. It didn't go through.

Once I got them on the ambulance, I actually stopped and looked at the corner and saw that there was a pay phone and thought to myself, this is a Verizon phone. There's no way that would be working. I thought, well, I have nothing to lose at this point. I dug into my pocket, happened to find a quarter, the only change I had, and I thought to myself, it's probably with my luck one of those 35-cent phones anyway, you know, it's going to be like that. I get there, pick it up, it's a 25-cent call, dial tone is there surprisingly, dropped a quarter in and actually it goes through.

My wife [REDACTED] I knew that you were going to be there, the first tower came down. I said, listen, calm down. I'm okay. I'm not going to do anything to endanger myself further. I'm okay. Do me a favor, call my mom in San Francisco, let her know that I'm okay, and then I hung up the phone. I said, I'll call you when I can, and then proceeded back towards the north tower.

At that point I stopped myself and thought to myself, you've got to be smart about this. The first tower came down. There's a great chance that the

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second one might as well. So I went back up half a block through the parking lot and then back onto West.

Q. You didn't know about the second plane at this point, but you knew the second tower was burning?

A. I didn't even know that the second tower was burning because I had no information that the second tower was hit.

Q. Got it.

A. So all the way up until the Secret Service or the security, whoever he happened to be, told me that the other plane was missing, that one plane had hit the Pentagon and another was missing, up until that point I knew nothing of a potential terrorist attack. It was only in my mind thinking in this day and age, it could be terrorism, so be careful. As a matter of fact, when I saw all that dust come through, I thought at that point, while I was walking, I thought, this must be anthrax. I mean, that's something that definitely went through my mind.

So at that point all our patients were onto the ambulances, our EMS group kind of disbanded, but I saw Captain Abdo on West and -- again, I'm not familiar with it. It's about one block further north of where 7 used to be. I met him at the corner and at that point

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we were literally thinking of going back towards 1 World Trade, knowing that the command post was there, stopped ourselves thinking we've got to be smart about this, this is something else that might come down, and as we had thought that, the sound before the sight coming, saw the second tower actually come down and then heard it afterwards, at which point all of us turned north and started running. We got about a block, maybe half a block, ducked into a little alcove where there were probably 30 police officers, firefighters, again, I don't recognize any shield numbers or helmet numbers, against the wall, when other cops ran by and said, you're just not fucking far enough. So we turned around and ran north, at which point the plume of the smoke, again, kind of a warm feeling came by us, luckily no debris, almost kind of lifting us and then kind of surrounding us again.

Then, at that point, when everything settled, we set up another treatment area at the corner of -- what corner is that? I don't recall. It's just south of Chambers, about a block south of Chambers. We set up another treatment area, started to see some of the walking wounded. There weren't too many people seriously injured. There were some firefighters that

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were complaining of smoke, of just inhalation and dust. We gave them some oxygen. That I'm sure was tracked because I had our EMT write down the names, but I can't recall any names.

There was one firefighter that he had given me his name, I actually wrote it down, I still have, saying that I'm sure they think I'm missing, please notify command that I'm okay. That I actually wrote down and I actually went to one of the chiefs and they took the name down, but their communications weren't 100 percent either. So they were trying to do what they could. I made that initial report.

At that point, while we were treating some patients and not more than maybe ten if that, they said there's suspicious packages around. I think the police officers came by and said we needed to evacuate. So we actually walked everyone further north another block and this time got to the Borough of Manhattan Community College and up on, I guess in their gymnasium area, up the stairs, we set up an area. We wanted to try to keep people like myself who were contaminated kind of out, keeping the area relatively fresh. So people who were covered like myself were kind of treating people on the outside, and those that were clean, those people

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were inside giving oxygen and water.

We were probably there for about 20, 30 minutes, when we were told that there's suspicious packages again, and this time people were running towards north again saying that there's a gas leak. So we evacuated everybody and started running again, and at this point I think we all decided we're going to get as far north as we could, decided to go to Chelsea, and I thought that was a good area because just being there initially realizing this was really going to be a body recovery, unfortunately, I thought that the ice rink would be a good place for a temporary morgue. I had heard in the past, I have a friend that works at DEA, that that was a huge facility.

As a matter of fact, I took one of the Japanese firefighters from Tokyo, who was interested in that kind of thing, while he was visiting the Fire Department here, he wanted me to stop by there just to see what kind of health facilities they had to take back to Japan with him. So I remember actually seeing the facility and remembering that it was large enough that, if they would allow us to use that facility, that would be an ideal location.

Then, as I was running, an ambulance, I don't

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even know who it was, I think it was a volunteer ambulance pulled up and just yelled, Doc, jump in. We were jumping into the ambulance, seven other people, kind of all in disarray. I remember thinking what just happened? Then I was dropped off at Chelsea, met with Chief Pascale and Chief Kowalczyk, who were at that point for EMS command, and then we decided to set the hospital area there.

About an hour after, they asked for us to return back to the -- I guess the Fire command post on Chambers and West. Then a couple hours thereafter, you know, we were trying to evaluate the best we could, 7 came down. I remember running again and some of the Fire guys started running and stopped and I guess they realized that we were far away enough. But I remember I just kept running until -- I figured until I see everything down, I'll keep running. I got about a block and then realized, okay, maybe I was a little silly. But I walked back to the command post, and then we tried to come up with a plan.

Then for the rest of the night we were trying to set up a hospital area, one at Stuyvesant High School, which we were able to set up, also trying to set up some strike teams up near the rubble pile,



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really mainly for rescuers at this point, just realizing there wasn't going to be many victims, but in case a victim was pulled out. I was there for about the next, I think, total of like 28 hours on the first day, just trying to coordinate what we could, communicating with OEM as well as to the federal assets that were coming. We heard that the DEMAT teams were coming, also that the FEMA USAR task force things were coming.

By this point, John Claire, Commissioner Claire, as well as Dr. Gonzalez and Dr. Richmond, who were also at the upstate meeting, were flown back apparently by state trooper helicopter. This was probably three, four hours into it, I think by 11:00 or 12:00 in the afternoon, and they were trying to coordinate what they could from their site. At that point, Dr. Gonzalez, who is really in charge of our New York task force, USAR, Urban Search and Rescue Team, decided that he would put together some semblance of a team to do some of the rescue efforts. So part of our obligation, myself, as being the doctor there throughout the night, would be to cover the main medical command as well as the USAR activities as well.

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At this same point, I heard that Dr. Prezant and/or Dr. Kelly had set up something at Pace, on that side. Initially, Dr. Cherson had set something up at the Liberty Street side, I think by the ferries. So I knew that we had good coverage in the areas. Then the rest of it was just trying to set up and coordinate. A lot of volunteers, medical staff and whatnot, came up very early, but I don't think they realized what magnitude of disaster this was. I had surgeons, I think 30 surgeons from a college conference at one of the hotels showed up by busload saying we're surgeons, we're here to help. I said, it would be great, but there's no one to pull out at this point. If you don't mind loading the water, that's what we're going to need at this point, you know, we sent everybody to Chelsea Piers and set up things over there.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Did you see any patients that night?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Approximately how many?

DR. ASAEDA: All the patients that I saw were rescuers in some shape or form. None were from the initial collapse. A lot of things in their eyes, which

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we washed out, some respiratory complaints, some minor bumps and bruises, someone that actually needed some sutures and whatnot. The way we had it set up was that anyone who needed a transport would be placed onto the ambulance and actually sent to the hospital because we also coordinated with the hospitals to find out what they could handle and we were told that initially they got some of the burns and the sick patients from the initial planes, but that was only a few hundred throughout the hospitals. We looked at Downtown Beekman, Bellevue, St. Vincent's, as far as Cabrini as well, and we were told that, after the initial wave, they weren't getting any patients, they were ready, so we knew that we didn't really need to do too much treatment on the scene, we would try to go back to the way that things are normally run in these disasters where we'd do an initial triage, do basic treatment that we can, and then ship them to the hospital. We felt that's where they would better be served. But it turned out that there weren't that many victims from the rubble.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Just a couple other questions.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

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ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: When did you find out for the first time that a second plane had hit the other tower?

DR. ASAEDA: This was after, I guess after my initial run and as I was looking at the north tower and thinking of going back, they had said, yeah, did you hear the second plane hit that as well? Then I started to put things together thinking this was obviously a terrorist attack. But not until then, again, I think mainly because I was in the tunnel when the second plane had hit and Citywide at some spots apparently doesn't come through and the traffic was too hard to get on that I actually I got on the radio to tell them, 784 was my identifier for the day, 784, show me responding. I just could not get through after about three attempts and just tried to go on by computer, but that was logged as well, so I couldn't actually log on that way.

Again, in retrospect, maybe I should have had an FM station on. That would have at least given me the news. But not thinking to that extent, I just had 1010 WINS on. It must have taken me -- you know, I must have found out about the first plane maybe five to ten minutes after it actually hit because I actually do

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remember seeing the smoke. I was in the tunnel when the second plane hit, popped out probably soon thereafter, and then with everything was trying to get on scene and listen to the radio. Again, I didn't hear anything about a confirmed second crash, either that or I just wasn't paying close enough attention or just didn't know about the second plane.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: My other question has to do with West Street.

DR. ASAEDA: Yes.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Either when you were coming over to 7 World Trade for the first time or after you evacuated 7 World Trade after the first collapse, did you notice a lot of rigs and buses lined up on West Street from like the command post on down?

DR. ASAEDA: I remember more particularly on West Street, the south end of West Street, between the south tower and the first tower, I would guess, a lot of vehicles, heavy fire rescue vehicles and ambulances as well. I don't remember as many north of Vesey. I do remember there was like a ladder truck on the corner of West and Vesey, actually on West, on the northbound lane facing the opposite direction. That vehicle I do

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remember and then sporadically here and there some other vehicles as well.

Where I parked my vehicle, I remember the vehicle I parked next to was a traffic enforcement vehicle, and then there were some -- they looked like I think it was a marked, no light, fire protection type vehicle I had seen as well, if I remember.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Was your vehicle destroyed?

DR. ASAEDA: Yes, it was.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Chief Downey's vehicle, can you describe it, when you saw it?

DR. ASAEDA: It was a dark-colored, unmarked car. I thought it was kind of particularly odd in that he looked to me like he was sitting in the back seat, behind the passenger, which would seem odd to me because I would think that, I guess, if he wasn't driving himself, he would be in the passenger's side. But in retrospect, he could have been in the passenger's side as well because he actually moved right past me, not very quickly but just enough for me to actually recognize him and say, oh, Chief, and then he got in front of me. Again, once we got onto West Street from the south end, there were probably 20 to 30

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vehicles already parked and then another 20 vehicles trying to get through, so I realized that I would not be able to continue. As Chief Downey's vehicle went forward and, again, seeing the ambulances on the left, I decided to go there, at least just get out of the traffic pattern. Then that actually worked in my benefit because I was able to bring the vehicle up the side street, the service road.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Anything else, Kevin?

MR. McALLISTER: I don't have any further questions. Do you have any other recollections or observations to share with us, Doctor?

DR. ASAEDA: That's about everything. I mean, obviously, all the volunteers, I know that everyone had great intentions, but I guess they didn't realize the extent of things. Just a tragedy.

Also, the other thing I remember is we used to have an EMT that worked here who was actually on the 86th floor of the World Trade building and I thought to myself, he must be in there. I thought he was gone, very afraid to call his family, as he was afraid to call me. When I finally found out he was okay via the office here, I called him and he had said that he

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actually was also an auxiliary firefighter here in New York City and had some thoughts of becoming a firefighter earlier. But he said as he was making his evacuation and seeing the firefighters come up fully loaded with their gear and their hoses going up to the floors to fight the fires, he said he was thanking everyone, thank you for what you do, thank you for what you do, and he said all thoughts of ever being a firefighter went right out the door for him there.

I can only imagine what they must have been going through, and hearing that there's 343 firefighters lost, initially, over 300 initially, just the thought of that is just tremendous, but when I actually saw the names on the list, it made me think twice again and also looking at the pictures. Now, not recalling the names exactly, seeing the pictures, I recognized one of the faces and I realized that there were more people that I knew through the Dominican Republic deployment or even through the bioterrorism course. I don't remember if he's a chief. I think it's Chief Fanning or Captain Fanning was lost as well. I saw his picture on that. There was another chief that was on that list as well that I recognized from the class and it's just horrific. Not that not



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knowing them makes any difference, but it just adds that personal touch that makes it really sad.

I didn't realize that Commissioner Feehan actually lived in the neighborhood that I just moved to a couple of months ago, and so once I got off the World Trade Center site, I heard about his wake the night before and went to the funeral, and it's just very hard to take, as I'm sure you know. Just devastating.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER DRURY: Thank you, doctor.

DR. ASAEDA: Sure. Thank you very much.

MR. McALLISTER: Thank you very much, Doctor.

DR. ASAEDA: If you need anything more, please let me know.

MR. McALLISTER: I'm just going to conclude the interview it's 1612 hours on October 11th and we are concluding the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110070

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT ROY DAVID

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 12th, 2001. The time is now 8:20 a.m. my name is Christine Bastedenbeck from the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview this morning with the following individual.

Please state your name.

LIEUTENANT DAVID: Lieutenant Roy David, emergency medical service.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Where are you assigned?

LIEUTENANT DAVID: Battalion 8, Manhattan south.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Lieutenant David, can you tell us about the events of September 11th, 2001, that morning.

A. September 11th, 2001, at approximately 8:50 in the morning I was assigned to the academy, the second week of an EMT refresher course.

While on a break just in front of the

academy, I was informed of an airplane crash into the World Trade Center. Subsequently this event was confirmed, and we were informed that we would be mobilized to the location.

There was a delay in obtaining vehicles for us to leave in. However, during that time some members, both of the ALS refresher and of the BLS refresher, were placed in ambulances, equipped and dispatched to the location. We then were placed aboard one Fire Department bus and two Transit Authority buses and in convoy, led by Chief McFarland, we responded into Manhattan.

Upon arrival in Manhattan, we were prestaged at a total of three locations prior to getting into the work area. The first one was the Pearl Street side of One Police Plaza. We stayed there approximately 35 minutes. The second one was Broadway just north of Chambers Street, half a block south of 26 Federal Plaza. Then we wound up at Church and Worth. There was some concerns about the 26th Federal Plaza being a potential hot spot, so we moved from there over to Church and Worth. That's an approximate. But it was on Church in the vicinity of Worth.

Then we were brought into the -- excuse me. I have to request the name of that high school, the one --

Q. Stuyvesant.

A. Stuyvesant High School, which is just to the west of West Street approximately two blocks north of the site.

At that point all the members that were on board the three buses were directed into the high school to assist there and be dispatched to other locations, and I was directed by an unknown person at this time to report to the command post to Chief Kowalczyk.

Upon arrival at the command post, Chief Kowalczyk directed me over to 225 Broadway. There in command of the medical treatment area, which included doctors and nurses, was Chief Charles Wells. I was eventually brought back to the command post by Charles Wells and then redispached back to that location.

When I was sent back to the location the second time, I was armed with a list of units that were to be released from the scene and redeployed back into 911 due to the high call

volume.

While I was in the process of releasing those units and working it out with Captain Race who was left in charge of the medical operation, I was approached by a clergyman from the Federal Bureau of Investigation who informed me that Fire Department chaplain Father Mychal Judge had expired and was in the Church and was in need of transport.

I quickly grabbed one of the units that I had that I was in the process of releasing and directed them to pick up and move Father Judge. When that was accomplished, I remained at the medical post assisting and also assisting with the move. We transferred the operation from the 225 Broadway to the lobby of Pace University.

At Pace University we had -- we set up -- I'm sorry, we set up in that lobby of that building, the lobby and the actual whole first floor. There was a threat of collapse of building number seven, so 225, we had to evacuate it.

While operating at Pace University in the lobby of the building, building number seven

or tower seven did in fact collapse and create a hazard on our side. But luckily we didn't lose anybody. No one was injured as a result of it, and we continued the operation.

I stayed there until approximately 11:00 at night, at which point I was brought back to the command post and just assisted with some miscellaneous tasks. I probably left the scene at 1:30, and I secured a ride out of there with Chief James Martin.

Q. Can you just give me a little more detail when you approached about Father Judge?

A. I was approached by, again, an unknown priest from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, since that was the jacket he was wearing, and he stated to me that Father Judge had expired approximately two hours ago.

When I went into the Church, in fact he had been pronounced by Dr. Kelly sometime earlier. At this point they just wanted to remove him up to his parish so that I guess he could be prepared for the next step.

He appeared to have an injury, a heavy bleeding injury to the left side of the rear of

his head, and it was obvious that he was also covered in debris, as his face and the rest of his body was covered with just I guess crushed mortar and brick matter.

Q. So you picked him up from what church?

A. I don't know the name of the Church.

It's on -- I'd have to refer to the map.

Q. I'm not sure if that map covers everything.

A. Yeah, let me just see. Let me orient myself here. It was St. Paul -- no. St. Peter's Church, which was on Barclay Street between Church and Broadway.

Q. So you assigned a unit there to --

A. Well, there were several units there that were operating supporting the medical unit for transport. As they were being released, this is the time that I was approached by this priest and asked for help.

A member from my command by the name of Carpenter was on one of the units I believe like an 8 Mary or something, perhaps an extra unit that had been running for the day. He was on that unit, and he was the one that did the



removal. I can't recall who his partner was at the time.

Q. And then they removed Father Judge to where?

A. They removed Father Judge to his parish, which is located on 31st Street. It's just opposite a fire station, I believe.

Q. Engine Company 1?

A. Yes.

Q. That's where they left his body?

A. Yes. They took him there, and I believe that's where they left him.

Q. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make at this time regarding the events that morning? Anything you say is fine.

A. Okay. My only concern was that -- and again this is not a bad mark against anyone. But knowing that at any time the personnel in the academy can be deployed, I think that the department should provide buses or some other type of mass people mover vehicles there, deadlined, ready to be moved. Because the only thing that we had that we could depend on was a few ambulances, and it just wasn't enough to move

60, 70 people from the academy.

Q. That's it? Okay.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview with Lieutenant Roy David. We thank you very much for your comments. The time now is 831 hours.

File No. 9110071

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FAISEL ABED

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

F. ABED

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time is 747 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Faisel Abed. I'm an EMT assigned to Battalion 8 and my unit is 08 David 2.

Q. Also present in the room is --

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001?

A. Originally, basically we weren't assigned, but we heard so much commotion over the radio, we decided, you know, we asked Central, send us and we went even as they dispatched us to the World Center.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. Charles Beshett.

Q. So they assigned you to the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, I mean there was so much noise when the

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first call came over, everybody just went like ballistic over the radio. Whoever was there. There was 01 Adam that was like the under the building at that time and then there were a couple of other units that said we will go, we will go. We said we will take you. It sounded legit. It did sound legit, but in the back of our of minds, we thought maybe it's one of the generators that blew up, something electrical, something mechanical. It's just such a tall building, things happen, you know.

So we asked Central to send us the job and we are driving down 34 Street and we get to 23 Street and you see tower one. It's like oh, shit, oh, god. Look at this. The first thing that comes to your mind is oh, it's an act of god, it's a terrible tragedy. I mean you think you know -- you look at it and say -- it's not the first time a plane hit a building. You had the Empire State Building. My parents told me back in 1945 when a big bomber hit the building, so it's an accident, god, it's a tragic accident.

But then we are driving and now we are like, we are about a half mile out, halfway from the World Trade Center and we see this shiny object coming and me and my partner are going, what the hell, what's wrong

F. ABED

with that plane. What is wrong with that plane. There is something not right with that plane. And he just -- the tower blew.

So my partner said stop the freaking bus, stop the freaking bus. The building's going to fall. The building's going to fall on us. It was coming -- the force -- you see like the -- shit, the whole top of the building go off and just the junk that was coming out of there and the explosion was -- I thought it was Hollywood. I thought this was an act. I said this can't be happening. In New York. It's not happening.

I slowed it down. He got scared and I got scared so we kind of just slowed down a bit, you know, and he says listen, we really can't go in there. There is too much coming off the building. You could see stuff flying out of the building and people way before you get there. So we do it. We go, we go. We finally go to Vesey and West. Turned there.

There was a couple of other units there. They set the staging area up. We had about 15, 20 people coming out of the building and there were nurses from, they're from AMEX. I think they are from the American Express building. A couple of their nurses. They were bringing patients out. They were sitting

F. ABED

down right on the sidewalk. Some were badly burned, some were injured. Some were just in shock. Basically we are there. We are treating some.

Q. Could you indicate where you parked your vehicle.

A. Here is north, we are right here. I would say we are right here. Exactly right here. We are right here.

Q. Just make a number 1 there.

A. Okay. We were right here. West and Vesey and the water is right here and you can't go past the water.

Q. Okay, what vehicle were you in?

A. 350.

Q. 350?

A. 350.

So what happened at that point we get out. We get out our stuff, we are just starting to take care of the patients. We are tagging them red, yellow, whatever color might be at that situation at that time. We were there on the scene maybe -- I know the second plane hit a little bit after nine, if I'm correct. If I remember. We got our stuff out. We started triaging the patients. We stayed right there.

F. ABED

I mean we didn't go any further because of the fact that it was just a dangerous situation.

We stayed there, people were coming out and we triaged them. We were there, I would say approximately maybe an hour. I know it started -- I think that building starting coming down around 10 o'clock or something like that. I don't exactly remember what time, but it was about that time the first tower came down.

Q. We have the time.

A. Yes, I don't remember exactly, but I know it did come down, the first building, right. 9:55. About an hour from when we were first there. With the grace of god we had gotten all the people out of there. We had gotten all the patients out of there. They were transported and everything.

Next thing you know, you hear another -- they had said there were jets out there that day. They were out there. I started to hear another jet, right, it sounded like a flush of a jet. What it was was actually the building coming down. I didn't actually see the building coming down but you heard it. Why I didn't see it, I don't know. We were just so busy concentrating on what we are doing. You just heard



F. ABED

this thrushing, thrushing noise like a rocket. I thought the building was under attack again.

You just start seeing this smoke coming down. We just took off. We went north. We actually -- sorry, we went west. We went towards the river. All right. Then we just went towards the river and went up north a little bit behind the building. That was after the first one went down.

Q. Were you still with your partner at that time?

A. No. At that time, forget it, we were gone. We separated. It was just one of those things. We separated. I was looking for him. He was looking for me. I asked all around if -- someone told me he saw him. He was okay. I heard at one point that he went to the hospital with another co-worker of mine, but that wasn't true.

We were there, I would say for maybe another 20 minutes, half an hour or so, and then the second building came down, so we had to run even more further. We ran up north further, and then what happened we ran into the school. Actually the school was coming out, Stuyvesant High School, the kids started coming out. They didn't have a clue what was

F. ABED

going on.

So we have like 3, 4,000 kids coming out of the school, not realizing the magnitude of what's going on. So we are starting to walk. Now it's coming down and we are starting to walk, but the school is funny, the school is like a break wall for the smoke that is coming from the building, so when the kids got past one end of the school they started panicking. So we all started getting nervous, because the only place else to go was the Hudson River. I'm a good swimmer, but the Hudson River?

So I started telling the kids, everybody, just calm down, everybody keep on walking. Keep on walking, keep on walking. We finally got out to West Street and went just go all the way up till we stayed at the -- what's the place up there.

Q. Chelsea Pier?

A. Yes, Chelsea Piers. After that, then there was a gas leak. There was another explosion, the gas went. At that point it was just total helplessness. We felt terrible. We felt bad.

Q. Where your vehicle was left --

A. The vehicle was left right there. It was left right there at West and Vesey Street. Just left

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it there, left everything. Just left everything. They tell you if running, don't look back. I was running looking back, making sure that cloud was coming, because it was coming. It was a horrific cloud.

It was like this monster coming out of the sky that was going to swallow you up. Then I noticed people jumping off the building. I caught this one guy over there. My eye caught him. It was just one of those things. My eye caught him. I was watching.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Once you got to the Chelsea Piers, and they had you staged there --

A. Well, I tell you, everybody -- it was so -- at that point, at that point, I think right after the first building collapsed, people were just walking around. They didn't know what to do. Everybody was just walking around. I was walking around like I lost my little puppy. I was definitely just total shaken. Forget it.

It got more organized at one point. At one point it started to get organized. I think after the second building went down, it finally started to get organized. Started getting all the ambulances lined up on West Street. It just really started to get

F. ABED

organized, but like I said, there wasn't really much for us to do. You had 400 ambulances there, just idling their engines. Not really doing anything. It was a shame.

If you ask me, can we ever prepare ourselves for something like this, not this magnitude. Not this magnitude, no. This was something else way beyond our comprehension and something that we, you know, can never handle again. It's impossible. It really is. As much training as we get, MCIs and things like that every year, I never want to see this again. I really don't.

I'm staged by the Empire State Building, so every time I stage by the Empire State Building, I'm like, I'm looking up all the time now. I mean I'm just like, oh. My partner is saying what are you looking at? Terrible terrible thing, really was.

Q. Did you eventually get to finding your partner?

A. Thank god, yes. We hugged each other. We gave a big hug, yes, we found each other.

Q. How long were you separated?

A. Almost until -- Jesus, almost until -- it had to be afternoon, one o'clock, 1:30, 2:00. I finally

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found him down around the command center. What happened was that I had gotten pulled off. I had a Chief come pick me up and drive me to the hospital, because our Captain was hurt, so he saw me walking up the street and he says do you have a unit? I said no, he says hop in with me and he took me up to the hospital.

Q. Who was your Captain?

A. Captain Stone.

Q. Okay. He had gotten hurt on the scene?

A. Apparently. Now that I've opened my mouth, I'm sorry, but he actually escaped. He was in the building. He almost -- from what I know, he almost -- escaped with his life just about. He really did. You didn't hear this from me, please. I'm afraid I'm opening a can of worms.

Q. No, you are not, no.

A. He almost escaped with his life. He really did. He just missed it. The building almost fell on him.

Q. Thank goodness he got out.

A. Yes, he got out. So I was in the command car with him. He drove me up to Bellevue and then I was told to take the command car and I went back downtown

F. ABED

to the command center. That was pretty much it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this regarding the events from the time the plane hit until about 12 noon?

A. It was just mass chaos. That's all I could say. It was just mass chaos. I think everybody was just saying, you know, there really isn't much we can do when the buildings went down and that we just got to look out for ourselves and take care of ourselves. That's basically what it was. We were just taking care of ourselves. We had no choice.

If we get hurt, who are we going to help. It was just basically be safe, keep yourself, keep your distance, keep your ears open, keep your radios open to see what was going on. That's pretty much the whole thing in a nutshell.

MR. ECCLESTON: Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is concluded at 758 hours. The counter on the cassette recorder is 194.

File No. 9110072

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JAMES MCKINLEY

Interview Date: October 21, 2001

## J. MCKINLEY

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: It's October 12, 2001. The time is 6:56 and this is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

JAMES MCKINLEY: My names is James McKinley, EMTD. I work out of Battalion 8, my shield is 5501.

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Also present at the interview is...

CHRISTINE BASTEDENBECK: Christine Bastedenbeck from the New York City Fire Department.

Q: James, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster of September 11, 2001?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me about the events that happened that day?

A: Basically I was just getting off duty when news came in, the MERV driver came in and said there's a plane into the World Trade Center. He took off in a hurry, I was about to go home, and I convinced my lieutenant to let me go to the MCI. So I went, and after watching it on the TV for maybe 2, 3 minutes, I was about to put my stuff in my locker and I decided that I had to go to this thing. I went down and I grabbed Smitty, who was working cleaning the vehicles. We stocked the vehicle, 169, with the lieutenant's permission, and we went to the MCI. As we were going down the



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FDR, I remember looking over and just seeing this huge hole in the World Trade Center. As we're going down, we went down the FDR, as we were coming across...I wasn't driving, I was teching. I remember coming up on the Trade Center, I don't know when the plane went into the building or how long it was there, but it was like, I was amazed to see that PD were already escorting people over the Brooklyn Bridge and to Chinatown. They were just clearing the whole area, and having people migrate towards Chinatown and over the bridge. So we came out of the FDR, we came across Vessey Street, and we were told by the radio to go to staging on West and Vessey. As we're going past we met command. I don't remember who it was. I remember seeing one, Gumbo, who was a lieutenant. I'm not sure what he is now.

Q: Chief?

A: Chief Gumbo, okay. So we parked out vehicles on Vessey street, I guess on the west side of the West Side Highway.

Q: Can you just mark on the map with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle? Approximately, it doesn't have to be exact.

A: There was like 15, 20 vehicles there already, and we just joined in the group. So I would guess about here.

Q: What was the vehicle number you were in?

A: 169. Then we were just waiting for orders from officers on the scene about what to do, and they told us just hang tight. My partner is telling me that they want us to stay by our vehicles, in case they find something to do. I wasn't communicating with the officers, my partner was. I was just standing by the vehicle watching the

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firemen do their stuff, watching the PD do their stuff. That's basically about it, I was just taking in the sight of the whole thing. Debris falling from the buildings, smoke, basically ----mayby this was a bad idea. Keep going?

Q: Keep going, you're doing fine. You're doing perfect.

A: As I was standing there watching this whole thing unfold, it was like I couldn't believe that some people were actually jumping from the building. Then as I looked up, I saw this helicopter hovering from in front of one of the buildings, it was the first one that was hit. Then all of a sudden I heard this huge explosion, I didn't know what it was cause nobody was telling me anything. I didn't know until we were called back to Chambers and something, Chambers and West Street, that it might have been a terrorist attack. I was this close to it, and I didn't know what was going on. After that I heard this huge explosion, I thought it was a boiler exploding or something. Next thing you know this huge cloud of smoke is coming at us, so we're running. Everyone is, firemen, PD, everyone is running away from the World Trade Center, up Vessey Street. This is North End, we was running around Vessey and around North end to get away from the first smoke. After the first building, I guess, I didn't know at the time that the building fell. After the smoke cleared, I went back, I was helping some people that were covered in dust and stuff like that. We set up treatment right on Vessey and North End, over here. As I was getting stuff to go into the treatment area, BP cuff, water, O-2, stuff like that, I was instructed to go back and treat patients. As I was picking up a patient on Vessey, on the east side of the West Side Highway and Vessey, I didn't know what was

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going on. I was just trying to treat patients. I put a fireman on a stretcher, I was leading him back to the treatment area. As I was getting to the treatment area, everyone is leaving the treatment area. I was like where is everybody going? They said the other building is leaning, we're getting out of here. We're moving the treatment area. So we put the fireman in an ambulance and they took off. We was trying to clear out the treatment area, and as we're clearing the treatment area, I hear this huge noise. Someone told me the building is exploding, I couldn't believe it. So we started moving the treatment area back even further. After the second one fell, we started running up...where is it? I'm not sure what these buildings represent, but we ended up down by the water, the cloud pushed us all the way to the water. And that's basically, after that it was like, we went back to survey the damage and we was trying to get our vehicles out of the rubble. Like after the first building fell, we were trying to recover, we were trying to move the vehicles off of Vessey Street and on to North End Avenue. I'm like moving vehicles, I'm helping people, we have this one fireman that had his arm --- it was deformed, it was broken and everything. I helped splint it. I tried to move four or five vehicles before I set up staging over near the treatment area. After we moved, we moved the treatment area like three times. We moved it around here. Then after the first one fell we tried to get back in there. Then the second one was falling, I don't know. After the first one fell, as I went back, I was just looking at it. There were vehicles on fire, there were ambulances too close to fire trucks burning, gas tanks were popping. The parking lot over here where we parked our vehicles, cars in the parking lot were on fire.

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Q: That was the parking lot over here?

A: I think this was a parking lot over here. I think this was a parking lot too, cause as we were running when the second building...this fireman was in front of us and we ran into almost like a dead end. As we're running behind him, he's like, "this way". I think he was a fireman or a police man, if we had followed him, we would have wound up in a dead end, and we probably would have got smoke in our lungs so we noticed that going in here would be a dead end, we have to go down this way. After the first one fell I was running up Vessey, then I walked back down Vessey towards West Street where all the fire engines were. They were covered in debris and they're smoldering. I just couldn't believe it. What amazed me too was things you don't even take notice of. Like, the street was littered with paperwork that was in the office building. I can't remember anymore, you know.

Q: It's ok, you're doing a perfect job. Just keep going with what you're doing.

A: After the first one fell, I was trying to sort through everything, going around helping people, seeing what we could do. Once I got too close to a vehicle that was smoking, it started to pop, I was afraid that the gas tank would explode. Everyone was like watch your back, watch your back, the firemen were trying to put out the fire. I keep reading in the paper now that it was at this point that they was trying to get the guys out of the other building that hasn't fallen yet. I can just imagine what it must have been like running down the stairs in the World Trade Center. As I was saying before, I didn't

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know what was going on. I didn't even know that the building had fallen. Maybe it was the overtime or the fact that I had worked all night, I was tired or whatever. But as we cleared the second building, our dispatcher kept telling us after the second one fell, told us to drop back to Chambers and West Side Highway. We had to go back to our vehicles that we had abandoned running from the building that had fallen. We thought it was gonna fall on the side, so I was running looking for the shadow of the building, hoping that it wasn't falling my way. If it was falling my way, I would want to know because I don't want to stop running to look back to find out which way it was falling. I had to find out a way to see if it was falling this way, if it was falling on me. For some reason it fell like this. So as we ran, we came back to move all the vehicles, get all the stuff out. I was trying to fall back to Chambers and West Side Highway. Then, I met my partner, we had lost each other when the building side collapsed. He was telling me, as I'm driving the vehicle up the West Side Highway, all of a sudden, there's my partner standing in the road there. I'm like, ah, there he is. I'm not sure if he got the order before I did, cause I was told to drop back to Chambers and West Side Highway. So, I parked the vehicle up there, and I went back, and we're standing. He's like, he told me that the guy, the terrorist?

Q: Osama Bin Laden?

A: Yeah. He's like, he said he was gonna get the World Trade Center. So I'm like, what are you talking about? He said, this is a terrorist attack. I'm like what? Then all of a sudden, he told me that something was happening in Washington too. Then

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he told me that they shot down another one. They said that the Air Force shot one down in Pennsylvania. But they later found out that they had a struggle. At this point, something happened. I think we heard some explosions or something, so the dispatcher starts telling us to go up to 23<sup>rd</sup> street and Chelsea Piers. My partner's like maybe it's gas or something, not just explosive gas. Not like Con Edison gas but like sarin gas or something like that. So we're packing everything up again, helping civilians who stopped to see this thing. So we pulled it up to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Chelsea Pier, that's where we made staging. Basically after that, once we got to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, we started to see other vehicles were coming already. They told us to fall back, they told everybody that was responding in to go to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, cause there was ambulances there already. So we got in line, steadied our pulses, dusted ourselves off, kind of like composed ourselves. And then there were lieutenants going around asking for unit numbers. After that it was just a big rotating in, at least 75-100 vehicles down there on 23<sup>rd</sup> street, all over. As we stayed there hour after hour, they kept coming from all over the state. Upstate, Jersey, Pennsylvania, we seen them from all over the state. As you stayed there they kind of like, rotated you in. If you were up front and they needed ambulances down there, they would send them down. We lost everything down there. I lost my tech bag, the only thing I didn't lose was the things that I had on me: my stethoscope, my helmet, my jacket. We even lost our stretcher. I don't know if we put in for it or not, but basically that's all it was. We got down there, we reported to the lieutenant. Then when the buildings started falling, we started falling back, the dispatcher telling us where to go. Chambers, then 23<sup>rd</sup> street.

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Everything like, hold on a sec, they ran out of planes to drop on us. So everything started becoming a little more predictable, Fire and PD performing their duties.

Q: Were you guys getting any news reports like what was happening? Like all the planes had been grounded and that information?

A: I thought that was great too. They said over the radio that they ordered all the planes across the country to just hit the ground. Anyone up after a certain time would be shot down. As you stand at 23<sup>rd</sup> street, we saw there was fighter jets cruising the air and stuff. The people at the 23<sup>rd</sup> street pier, they saw the ambulances there, they heard the news. They started bringing out bottled water for us, they started setting out tables. I don't know if they have some kind of disaster plan that they followed, but they were very nice. They started bringing out water, bread, then sandwiches started appearing later on, fruit, apples. They made the whole facility at our disposal. I don't know if that's ---- but I was very amazed at the way they responded to the situation. I sat there for like 2 or 3 hours waiting to go back in, but they never sent me back there. I thought they would, but they wouldn't. Even the hospitals were surprised at how few patients they got. Basically that's about it.

Q: What time did you end up working till that day?

A: Well, we waited at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street pier, and then finally a lieutenant put us back in service, back into the 911 system. We did one call and we went to this Gouvaneer hospital, picked up a young lady. I call them young, but she was in like her 70s. She was being treated there, being transported back over to Bellvue Hospital. I

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didn't know that you're not supposed to take a stable patient not part of the incident, Ground Zero, back to Bellvue. So I went to Bellvue, and all the doctors are expecting something from Ground Zero, and this lady's from Gouvaneer. So the doctor's like oh, okay, we'll treat her anyway. Well, he didn't say anyway, not that attitude. After that, I went back to the station, we had to re-start the vehicle before we brought this patient up. We went back in the 911 system and over to Bellvue. Then I went back, and I started work that night at about 10:00. I didn't get off till the lieutenant...I worked something like twenty hours that night, until 6:00. Then I went upstairs to the locker room. I think I was tired but I wasn't tired. I slept on a bench maybe an hour or an hour and a half. Went out, got something to eat, came back, washed up, put on my spare uniform and reported to duty about 12:00 that night. I don't remember, what did I do when I came back on duty? I think they sent us over to the Chelsea Pier, with all the other ambulances. All those other ambulances from all over the state was just standing by there. I guess they came down, they wanted to go down to Ground Zero. They didn't like sitting at 23<sup>rd</sup> street. They wanted to go down there, help do something. The bosses say you gotta sit here, you gotta sit here. That's basically what happened. EMS went on 12 hours on and 12 off. I finally got home the next night, took a shower, felt good, fell asleep. That's about it, unless you have any other questions.

Q: No, is there anything else you would like to add to this in regard to the events that happened prior to noon that day?

A: Before the planes hit? Something I observed?



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Q: From when the planes hit until approximately noon. Is there anything in there that you want to add other than what you've already told us?

A: Um...like...?

Q: Just, if there's something that you thought of that you forgot to tell us, that you want to tell us. If there's nothing, that's fine, you can, you know...that's fine also.

A: I don't know, basically that's about it.

Q: Okay.

A: But what I found amazing was that nobody knew what was going on. I didn't know what was going on. I think that if we had known that these people would have done something like this, and that this is what it was...I usually watch the planes. They usually go from south to north, so when I heard the news about a plane hitting that side of the building, the plane would have had to been going from north to south. I thought it was an accident. That's what I was working on, down on the scene. It was a horrible accident, this guy was maybe coming out of Newark, and to avoid another plane, he swerved and couldn't get control of the plane. I think that if all of us would have some idea of what was transpiring, it would have been a lot different. Basically, I can't say, I don't know if that's enough.

Q: Perfect. James, I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. The time is 7:21. The counter on the recorder is 373 and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110073

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN JAGODA

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

## J. JAGODA

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time is 0627 hours, and this is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, title, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

JOHN JAGODA: My name is John Jagoda, my badge number is 3378, I work out of Station 13, Battalion 8.

Q: John, were you assigned to the World Trade Center Disaster on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001?

A: Yeah. When I received a phone call at home, I asked if I should come in and I came in on my bicycle, met with another guy here and we went down there.

Q: En route to the assignment what did you see?

A: A lot of smoke, a lot of fire. People just scared in the streets, it was from a distance away, but it was very scary to see.

Q: When you arrived at the World Trade Center, where did you park your vehicle?

A: It was right around Broadway, I guess, and Vessey Street.

Q: Can you just indicate there on the map with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle?

A: Around here.

Q: Thank you. Did any civilians report anything to you when you first arrived?

A: Well, when we first arrived the building had just collapsed I guess just five minutes after we got there. It was pitch black for awhile, and as the smoke cleared, two men were dragging a female cop over to us who was having chest pain and couldn't breathe. Another cop came over who had chest pains and couldn't breathe. Then there was another gentleman who asked us to help him, his arm was almost off. I mean, from the elbow down it was just bones ripped apart. There were so many other people. We just did what we could handle. We handled those three patients and took them to the hospital.

Q: You said when you arrived the building was coming down, which tower was this that was coming down? Was it the first one or the second?

A: It was the first one. Because we had brought the patients over to Bellvue, and were on our way back when we heard that the second one had come down.

Q: Okay, what happened next?

A: Well, we got those people in the ambulance and brought them to Bellvue. It was just total disbelief, you know? Everybody at Bellvue was waiting for us. We basically just washed our hands then turned around and went back. We knew there was gonna be a lot of people down there.

Q: When you said you went to Bellvue, who were you talking about we?

A: Me and my partner, and the two officers, and the one male who's arm was pretty badly mangled.

Q: Who was your partner?

A: Pete Rosie, he works up at Harlem. He lives not too far from here, so he rode his bicycle also.

Q: Okay, so you brought these patients to Bellvue, and then what happened next?

A: We cleaned up and then just went right back down.

Q: Okay.

A: When we got down there we were on the opposite side, I think near Washington Street or Greenwich Street. As a matter of fact, we were on Church street, maybe Church and Park.

Q: Okay, can you just indicate on the map with a number 2 where you parked your vehicle?

A: Right there.

Q: Okay, what vehicle was that?

A: 340.

Q: 340? Okay.

A: From there we met up with a group of other ambulances and supervisors over that were there and just kind of waited. From there I can't remember.

Q: Okay, just to the best of your memory...

A: It was just a bad day, it was a terrible day. I just want to put it out of my mind to tell you the truth.

Q: I'm sure. When you arrived back at the scene, had the second tower come down already?

A: Yeah. It came down...as we were leaving here, heading back down we heard over the radio that the second tower had fallen. So we all went to let's see...is this Washington here?

Q: This is Washington here.

A: This is West?

Q: This is West Street and this is West End

A: Yeah, we were all right here, by West Street here and we were down by the West Side Highway and Barkley.

Q: You were staged there?

A: Yeah.

Q: Who were you staged with? You reported to a particular officer there?

A: I honestly don't remember, there were so many people. I'm also a MERV driver, so at one point I was working the MERV.

Q: Okay, was that shortly after you arrived back or was that later on in the day?

A: That was later on in the day. Then I was on the MERV the next day. I believe the next two days.

Q: Were there people there that you recognized as Fire Department personnel, but they weren't in their uniform?

A: Not that I saw. I saw one guy who used to work here and he was in the streets. He used to work with me up at Met. When I was there. I don't know if he's still on the job though. But he was in plain clothes. He came up to me and said hey, how are you doing?

Q: What was his name?

A: I don't know, I left Met six years ago, so I don't know. It was just a very frustrating few days. Then to find out on Thursday that I lost so many friends, that's the hardest part, just being there and not being able to do anything. I just felt kind of helpless.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about this day, the events up until about noon?

A: Until noon we just ran back and forth. We took three patients. Then the second trip three. Then we took one. I think we made like 5 or 6 trips to the hospital.

Q: The next trip you made, do you know how many patients you took?

A: The second trip? I think it was three, but I know at one point, there was one where we took a fireman who was having trouble breathing, he was complaining of a little discomfort. But he just kept saying it was just aggrita. But we said now is the time to take you to the hospital. So we took him to Beth Isreal, as a matter of fact, (inaudible)

Q: All the trips you made to the hospital, you went to Beth Isreal? You went to Bellvue?

A: We went to Bellvue and Beth Isreal.

Q: So those were the only two hospitals?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, after you brought him to Beth Isreal, were you back on the scene before noon? Approximately, was it after noon?

A: I think so, the time was just...time didn't count. It was just back and forth back and forth. Time didn't mean anything. When we got to Beth Isreal, there was

someone there hosing down the ambulance because we had about two inches of soot on it. The time...I don't know about time, it seemed like everything stopped, you know? It was just, I was more or less like a zombie focused on going taking, going taking, going taking, and not paying attention to anything else at all. Come to find out later on that I had so many friends in there. All these guys dying...

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

Q: I thank you very much for speaking with me. This interview is concluded at 6:37.



File No. 9110074

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ADOLPH SMITH

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is October 12th, 2001. The time is 10:31 hours, and this is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name and title.

EMT SMITH: Adolph Smith, EMT.

MR. ECCLESTON: And your assigned command area?

EMT SMITH: I'm assigned to Battalion 8.

MR. ECCLESTON: Of the New York City Fire Department?

EMT SMITH: As a de-con specialist.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also in the room is --

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Chris Bastedenbeck from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Mr. Smith, were you working on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you please tell me about the events

of that day?

(Pause.)

MR. ECCLESTON: The time is 10:33, and we are going to be continuing this interview.

Q. Mr. Smith, can you tell me about the events of September 11th?

A. I was assigned to the World Trade Center incident, and we arrived and were directed to go to Vesey and West on the west side of West Street. We arrived in that area, and I don't remember the captain's name. He directed us to park along (inaudible). So we did. So we backed in to park.

I just happened to look up, and what I thought was debris coming down from the north tower was people and bodies.

(Pause.)

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 10:35 hours. Mr. Smith is unable to continue with this interview.

File No. 9110075

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT RENE DAVILA

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 12th, 2001. The time is 1220 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the Fire Department of New York City. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

LIEUTENANT DAVILA: Lieutenant Rene Davila, shield number 328, lieutenant in Battalion 04, Fire Department of New York.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present in the room is.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Lieutenant Davila, were you assigned World Trade disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A. I was assigned or I put myself on assignment immediately after I heard the transmission of the plane hitting the tower.

Q. Can you tell me about the events of that day?

A. Okay.

Q. Start from the top.

A. Actually just prior to the plane hitting tower one, I was in the office communicating with Lieutenant Bill Melarango. I just happened to be standing over the desk when I heard one of my units, "01 Charlie," put a priority message over the frequency stating that the plane just hit the tower. Seconds later I heard another one of my units, "01 Adam," yelling the same thing.

I immediately put myself on the assignment. I ran out, jumped in the vehicle, starting responding. When I got over to Rutgers and South Street, I was able to see the building. I saw a big hole, what appeared to me at that time to have been a fire or probably secondary to an explosion. I confirmed there was an incident. I couldn't confirm it was a plane because I didn't see the plane.

Immediately I confirmed the incident. I was over the citywide frequency. Basically I started calling for resources. I told them immediately to alert the senior staff. I told them to get the MERV rolling, start sending all

available units to that location. Being around during the bombing, I basically knew we had an incident which was going to generate a great many patients.

I couldn't tell you exactly what floor it was. I couldn't tell you how many floors were gone but there was a good portion of the building that was definitely destroyed. So I knew we had some casualties and fatalities.

Responding now -- what do you want me to talk about? Do you want me to talk about personal feelings too?

Q. Sure. Everything.

A. Well, as far as I feel, a lot of personal feelings came. Personally I always thought about -- you know you see that guy on 911 or something like that and he's a hero or something and he's a big shot or whatever. I know for myself -- I can't speak for somebody else -- yeah, I'm going to be like that. Well, I was given the opportunity to be that guy, and I immediately did not want it.

As I'm driving, I'm driving and I'm also talking on the frequency. But I remember

that coming through my mind. I also thought of Lieutenant Tony Torres, first of all because he's from the battalion, second of all because he's Hispanic, but next he was the first responding supervisor to the bombing at the World Trade Center towers.

Going through all those thoughts and stuff also, I started trying to think logistically, trying to think of how we were taught. Preplans, I don't even know if they existed since the merger. However, I still think that way.

So when I traveled down there, I was trying to go ahead and get down there where I could get down by Vesey Street. Vesey, as far as I remember, is the preplan for our staging area.

I remember I ran down, I came down around across by Beekman Hospital and made a right over on Beekman Street and went up. I did a couple turns across Broadway. I ended up coming down Vesey.

Right over here, right before the union is normally where we would have set up staging, but it appears when the towers got hit that a lot



of debris already was in that street and in that area. A lot of debris was flying around there, and it definitely wasn't, if anything, a safe area to set a staging. Plus I noticed that all the other apparatus and stuff was still continuing on over to West Street.

So I continued on to West Street, made a left-hand turn, and I set the first -- staging and command post basically -- you've got West Street. I was on the east side of West Street. I was setting staging of my units, and I had my command right over here, pretty much adjacent to the rescue that was running into tower one.

Q. That's where you parked your vehicle then?

A. That's where I originally parked my vehicle.

Q. Can you just indicate that by a number 1 on the map?

A. Trade Center one, Trade Center two. So I'll be like number 1.

Q. So you parked your vehicle there.

A. Right.

Q. And you tried to establish a command

post there?

A. That's what I had given directions. Right behind, right on the other side of the median there was the bus of 01 Charlie. I couldn't see my other unit, 01 Adam, which later I found out they were actually on Liberty Street.

A couple other voluntaries were starting to arrive at that time, but I remember going over to 1 Charlie because they were my unit. I went to the back of the vehicle. They had about six -- is my language permissive?

Q. Whatever you want to say.

A. This is exactly the way I talk.

I ran to the back of the vehicle, and I said, "What the fuck you got?" No, I saw the patient in the back of the vehicle. I saw some people with difficulty breathing. Nobody was on 02. I didn't see no amputation or anything at that point.

I already knew that there was that type of patient coming out, because when I first went 84 on the scene and advised citywide, one or two people leaving the tower, I'd seen a couple of amputations. I'd seen a couple body parts in the

street coming towards that location.

I saw people coming completely burnt at me where their clothes were singed off with burns, probably from one to fourth degree going down into the bone. They were walking to me, and I was immediately going, "Walking wounded, you go down that way across the street."

I went in the back of 1 Charlie. I said, "Do your patients walk?" He said, "Yeah." "Tell them to get the fuck out and run that way." At that time I told him to close the door to the vehicle and pull every triage tag that they had available. I started just yelling at them, "Triage, triage, triage."

Then as the other units were responding in, all I was telling them is -- they were like -- everybody was trying to run to grab a patient. I said absolutely not. I think that was one of the most difficult things I had. In fact, right now today, I was talking at roll call to people about triage and the importance of triage. I said, "Triage, triage, triage."

There were a couple AMR units there. I think the next unit I saw was a St. Vincent's

paramedic unit, and the same thing again.

They're serious. I don't care. Triage, triage, triage.

At that time I went ahead and I noticed already I was losing my voice. I grabbed the crew of 1 Charlie. I knew these two guys. I told both of them to stick to me like glue. One of them was the staging officer. The other one had to stay with me because he was going to be my voice. Just in case I lost my voice completely, at least I was able to talk through him and he would have been able to communicate for me.

The onset from the time I was basically trying to grab a hold to try to get an ICS system operating. I knew senior staff was responding. I have to be honest, when I first got there, the first thing I did was get out of my vehicle and look to see if I saw another light blue shirt. I was hoping somebody else got there before me. That's what I was actually hoping. But no, to my dismay, there was no one else there.

Q. Who did you make this staging officer?

A. The staging officer was EMT Alex Loutsky.

Q. Who was the other --

A. As a matter of fact, you'll probably see him. He's in the press paper. He's downstairs too.

Q. Who was the person that stayed with you?

A. He was the one that just went out ill, secondary probably to this, Ralph Ramos.

Again just trying to get a hold of the whole situation. At that point I remember one thing. St. Vincent's unit had some people in their vehicle they were going to transport, and I said, "You're not going anywhere. You're triaging." I knew the importance of triage at that time until we got some more resources.

In between that I'm trying to transmit basically what's going on. I can't really remember much of my words except basically I was given them the access and advising that we have clear access to the location from both sides of West Street. I knew that was clear on both sides, whatever they could get in from that location.

There was debris all in the air, and I

remember I mentioned at one time this is a hard hat operation.

Then as I'm communicating I catch from my peripheral vision on the right -- I didn't even think about it hitting the building. I'm just basically like what the hell is he doing there. Before I knew it, he disappeared behind the building, and bingo, there was an explosion. I remember yelling over the frequency, however I communicated, a secondary explosion in the second building. At that time I remember I repeated over and over, because I had debris hit my helmet, "This is a hard hat situation, a hard hat operation, a hard hat operation."

I looked around me, and everybody like maybe stopped for a few seconds like, whoa. I can honestly say that it didn't stop the operation from moving in the direction that it was moving at that particular time. Everybody kind of appeared to still continue doing what they were doing. The firefighters were still loading into the building, except that now they're starting to run over to tower two.

A little while right after that, I

started seeing a couple light blue shirts come in. I don't remember the lieutenant's name. Lieutenant Mann was one of them from operations I remember seeing. Then I saw Lieutenant Terranova.

Q. Ross?

A. Ross he's here now. And Chief Gombo. I came over to Chief Gombo. I still speak about this, because the look that he gave me-- he looked at me with his mouth open, and I looked at him the same way. I handed him my clipboard with the units that I had there to start. It was basically like the command was turned over with very little communication. It was just like this is it.

He knows I knew the area, and he asked me what was in the other side of the building. I'm like a little rattled. I think Loutsky or Ralph, because these guys follow directions, I told them to stay with me like glue. Every time I turned around, I bumped heads with them.

They told me Church and Fulton. Church and Fulton was told to Chief Gombo. He said, "You go ahead and start operations over there and

get the vehicle over there." We sent 1 Charlie, in their bus, came back over here, on Vesey going over to Church and Fulton right here in front of the Millennium.

Q. Did your vehicle go there also?

A. Yeah. I got in my vehicle, and I started going. However, on the way there a body jumps -- well, I think I drove over a couple of bodies and stuff like that.

Another walking body jumped in front of my vehicle. That happened to be Captain Stone. He was like, "Stop!" He ran from somewhere and just -- "Where you going?" I said, "Church and Fulton." He said, "I need you to take me here." I said, "Chief Gombo told me to go ahead." He said, "I told you to fucking take me here." I said, "Okay. You're going there. You're going there."

I put him in the vehicle and brought him over to the command post, got my vehicle turned back around, and I made it to Church and Fulton.

Q. That's indicated by number 2 on the map?



A. Right.

Church and Fulton, I tell you, when we first got there, it took longer than it would take normally to get there. There were lamp posts in the street. There was all kinds of metal on the street. There's soot about two feet high in different areas throughout the street. There's bodies. There's been a couple of bodies and people still coming out.

Of course now we're being approached by PD and everything: I have a patient here. I've got a patient there. I'm telling them, "I can't handle it. Tell them to run and go that way. Tell them to go that way."

What we started doing is right in front of the Millennium, started to direct walking wounded to go over up Fulton Street, and the ones that needed oxygen, things of that nature, we were setting up over here in this area.

Already by that time now I started getting more resources. I saw the Cabrini paramedics show up. I had a lot of AMR units there. Lieutenant [REDACTED] came.

[REDACTED].

Q. [REDACTED]?

A. [REDACTED], right.

Now, you want to hear personal feelings? I'll give you personal feelings. You know what, she could be a fantastic person, but they don't have field experience. I think this is very important, because a couple incidents happened.

I went over and I see Loutsky, and I walk over. First of all, she was there. She was a captain, the highest ranking. But I still felt that I was in charge of that operation and I felt it calling me to that.

I had my unit 1 Charlie, and I see Alex. By that time we've got AMR, and we're loading the AMR buses. They were parked, and they were parking all over. There was no structure. So what we're doing is we're blocking that access and egress out of that location. There was no structure.

The same thing with my voluntary units that were coming there. They had 911 training. They're able to go ahead and treat the patient accordingly. However, no idea of the incident

command system, staging or about getting in, getting out.

When I started doing AMR, I started to tell Loutsky, "Load all the minor injuries and stuff in there. Get them and just tell them to take the bus over to Brooklyn." I didn't want to load the hospitals in Manhattan. Shoot the bus over to fucking Brooklyn. Just get them out of the way, because they were in the way. That was the bottom line.

But I see Loutsky at one time with a clipboard, and he's trying to take names of people that are fucking hysterical. I said, "What the fuck are you doing?" He said, "The captain told me to do tracking and take names." Tracking is fine when you've got 10 patients and 20 patients and maybe even 50 patients, but I've got two fucking 110-story buildings emptying out in front of me and I've got a captain telling me do tracking.

So I told him, "Fuck what the captain said. I'm in charge, and I'm telling you forget about names and forget about fucking numbers. Just load them in the bus and get them out of

here."

If I'm wrong, you write me up, and I'll go see your guys in BITS. But you know what? Fuck it. I thought that was -- and I told her afterwards when we did that interview for Third Watch. I made it a little joke. I had to be a little respectful, but I had to go ahead and explain that.

The sector was starting to get formed -- we had like the sector. I had [REDACTED] -- again, people from operations [REDACTED] is a very nice guy. People in operations, they're not used to the fucking street or to reality. He came in and all of a sudden he started talking on the radio. I said, [REDACTED] what the fuck you doing talking on the radio?" Gombo don't got time to hear that shit. This is the big one. We got an assignment. You do the assignment. Bottom line, get the patients out. Maybe down the line you get calmed down. Then you start playing here's the command system.

Bottom line is you've been trained to do this; you go ahead and do it. I'm pissed off a little now about it after the fact. Then you

didn't have the time. It was just like what the fuck are you doing?

So I came out and said, "You want command? Here, use my radio. Take command. But we need to react. Somebody needs to be the treatment officer. You're a medic. I gave you the treatment officer." Bottom line, I didn't want to go ahead and pull I'm the senior lieutenant, whatnot. It wasn't time for that.

These are some of my feelings, because if they're going to do anything about this, people need to remember the old way we used to do it in EMS that, you know what, the senior lieutenant is the one in charge until the next person of rank comes in, in that nature.

The bottom line is get the patients out. Triage and get the patients out of the goddamn way. That's the bottom way. That's the way I was taught. That's the way Chief Goldfarb taught me back in the old days. This is the way you do MCI, this is the way you do it, get it done. Guys like Captain Stern and Jeff Armstrong. All these guys, they did MCIs, not the playing and fucking around on the radio,

talking about I've got this and that, because you know what? You got thousands of people coming.

By now I'm watching people jump out of windows. It's not like when I saw them jump six, seven or eight out of the Shomberg Plaza up in Harlem. They were jumping now one, two, three, four, smashing like fucking eggs on the ground. People were getting hit by bodies falling.

These guys were talking about write down names. I was like, you're fucking out of your mind.

(Interruption.)

A. Again, the system was starting to get running. I remember Duane Walker. Duane Walker is one of the division supply guys. He came and brought extra tanks of O2, starting unloading those in the sector. I remember asking somebody to try to tape off areas over here in front of the Millennium, because you had the lobby, you had the lobby was here in the corner, and I was telling the walking wounded to go that way.

We had people with all kinds of injuries. A lot of the primary injuries that we were getting originally was nothing but

hysterical patients, a lot of hysterical. I remember one guy across the street went into a grand mal seizure and stuff like that, and they pulled me over there. This guy is down and I looked. I said, "He's having a seizure. Just stay around him and make sure he doesn't get hurt. Bye."

We were starting to get people moving. Again, we were using AMR. They had like three or four buses there, if I'm correct. I know about two of them before the collapse happened I was able to get out, load them up and get them out of here.

Now, something that really fucks with me a lot is Lillo. Lillo came up to me and said, "Lieutenant, my wife is in the building." I'm like, "Oh, what are you saying? What are you saying?" I don't even know his wife. I knew his other wife that worked the same job, but I don't know his new lady. "Okay, do me a favor. Help me out here and if I see her I'll direct you to her."

We were just working along. People were pulling my coat, "This one is more serious.

I've got to go." Tag them. We get a bus, we throw them in.

I remember one guy was laying down. He had an open chest wound about the size of my fist in his right chest. I kept on looking. I knew what was coming. I knew he was going to go downhill. He had that look in his eye like -- he wasn't even talking. He was going into shock.

All of a sudden you heard the rumble and people yelling and screaming. You look and you see -- I didn't see the top of the building. I didn't see the top of tower two. The collapse started. You felt like the ground -- it was like a deep sound, rumble; like you're laying on the platform and the D train is coming. You look and you see what -- I best describe it as a wave coming.

I started running in my direction. I started running into the hotel. Something knocked me. I don't know whether it was --

Q. The Millennium?

A. We were in front of the Millennium.

I'm talking going in through the lobby.

Q. Okay.



A. Something knocked me down. I don't know if something hit my helmet or whether it was a force. I got down, and I thought I've got to get up. By the time I got up, it was like [sound] I'm overcome by black and I'm running in the building in this black, and I'm running and I'm running and I'm running.

The next thing I know, I see a little light, and I follow that light. I run in there, and I find I'm in an office, and I close the door. I close the door and then I start walking, and I'm panicked, I'm panicked. I lost it. I lost it for a few minutes in here.

In this room there's nothing but computers, maybe five, six computers, and phones. As I'm in there, this force is still coming through the cracks of the door. I see some coats and I saw a water fountain. So I wet them, and I wet them and I stuff them under. I'm like walking back and forth, "I'm a medic. I'm a medic. I'm not a fucking firefighter. What do you do? What do you do? What do you do?"

I went to one of the computers for a minute. I thought I'd go on AOL or something and

call for help. I was like, "What the hell am I doing?" I was in a dead end. There was no way out of that office. I'm now going, "What the fuck did you do? You idiot. You ran out. There's no way out. You're going to die in here." It was getting real difficult for me to breathe in there, the dust, and there was no air transmitting across.

There was a bunch of debris. I tried to get out. I said, "I've got to get out of here." I've got one of those little super lights from Gauls magazine. Better than a mag light. It's pretty bright. It wasn't bright enough.

Could you excuse me a minute?

MR. ECCLESTON: We'll stop the tape at 12:47.

(Pause.)

MR. ECCLESTON: We're continuing this interview at 12:49.

A. I was in this office or whatever it was. I went ahead -- I opened up the door, and some of it -- the noise had settled. However, you heard distant sounds. I said let me try to get out of here. I opened up. It's pitch-

pitch-, pitch-black. The only light was inside the door.

I grabbed this mag light, and I said maybe if I could make it out through this corridor or whatever I walk through I'll hit some light and I'll get the hell out of here. I've got this light and I'm feeling myself through the wall. With the flashlight you could only see probably less than a foot.

I'm feeling. All of a sudden I am walking and walking and I find myself inside an elevator. That's when I realized this is the wrong thing to do, because it could be the elevator is not here and I'm going to end up falling down the shaft.

So I tried to get back. It took me a while to find myself back. By now I'm really gagging for air. I get back in, and I close back that door. When I got in there, now it's a different feeling. It's a feeling of this is it, I bought the bullet, I'm going to die. I have to honestly say, all of a sudden from the panic that I was at it was just like a warmth. What do you do?

Actually what I did, I picked up the phone, and I got a dial tone. I called my wife. She doesn't really work too far. I called her, and I'm thinking -- if she answers the phone hysterical. I got the secretary or somebody in the office, and she was on the phone. She said, "I saw it." Her office is up at 250 Church. They viewed the whole thing. She knows I work this area and the whole nine yards.

I'm said, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You could hear her yelling on the other side of the phone with people from 911.

I'm said, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



I don't know how much time goes by between those periods, but there still wasn't the second collapse. I come out. I push out some of the rubble and stuff like that. I started seeing a little light, which turned out to be the lobby. I came out in the lobby, and it's destroyed. I couldn't go out the way I came in through the lobby. I came out through the side door on Fulton Street. I'm covered in soot.

I come out. It was terrible when I got there and we set up all of this and how I drove there. There were people on the ground. There was debris morbidly all over.

I was devastated. I was like relieved that I got out of that building, but I was like look at this. The radio was basically quiet then. If you heard anything, it was point-to-point communications. You heard some maydays and you hear people yelling for help, 13.

I'm like walking like the (inaudible), and I met up with this kid Ramos. And we hugged

and we kissed. I told him, "What we can't do alone we can do together. We'll get the fuck out of here."

He goes (inaudible). I said, "Ramos?" He said, "What?" I said, "I left my wallet and my refund check in the fucking vehicle. I don't think Uncle Sam is going to give me another refund check."

Q. At this point was your vehicle lost?

A. Basically all we to do is go around the building, came around. But it took longer than usual because you're walking in like this shit. Like you move and it's this soot like heavy dust.

While we're walking I realize that we only have two people. I see my vehicle. The seats are covered. I've still got my bag. I hold it like a trophy. Like people collect basketballs. I haven't touched -- whatever the force was, it was so strong that it went inside of the bag.

But we were there. Vehicle 219 was destroyed.

Q. Was it on fire?

A. What?

Q. Was it on fire?

A. Fire? We saw the sucker blow up. We heard "Boom!" We were walking up Fulton Street. I don't know how far we made it up when someone says, "The building's coming down." By the time I realized, it's a repeat.

We were running, and I looked back and it seems like the sides of the street were getting narrower. The sound got louder and the wave. I remember we separated one time and Ramos wanted to go down into the train station. I said, "No fucking way. We're out here. Without ventilation, we're definitely dead." I said, "If I'm going to die, I'm going to die with a fighting chance."

We held hands, and we were running. The next thing we know, [sound]. When it covers you, it's silent. Ramos was just a little slightly like (inaudible). I couldn't see him. I tell him -- I always have a handkerchief; it's an old Spanish thing. I had my handkerchief, and I wrapped it around. I told Ramos the same thing. I said, "Wrap something around your mouth. Keep the soot and stuff out and just

breathe shallow. Just take enough oxygen, because you don't want to breathe all this dust."

If anything that was comical, the human body -- or maybe I'm just a fucking nut. Things that happened, because we're walking and Ramos says, "Lieutenant." I'm like, "What the fuck you want?" You could hear each other and that's it. He said, "I lost my radio." We're dying. We're going to die. This guy is telling me he lost his fucking radio. I said, "Remind me if we make it through this, and I'll fucking write you up."

The next thing you hear (knock), my helmet hits -- I still don't know what it is. I'm assuming it was a lamppost or something. That's when I told Ramos this is not going to work, we're not going to make it. We decided we were holding on together. We held together, baby.

We moved over to the right, and we felt along through the buildings. Along through the building, all the businesses must have been locked up after the first impact, because all the businesses were closed. We're walking and walking.



I happened to catch a little light. There was a glass in a cleaner. I'm banging, "Open the fuck up or I'm kicking this shit in." Nobody wanted it kicked in because all that shit will come in. They opened up. We ran in. We came in there -- what turned out to be a Subway store.

There were a bunch of people in there. I was happy to see them; they were happy to see us. I have to honestly say that thank God for those people and the situation I thought of, because they were looking at us because we were in uniform. "Us" is me and Ramos. Ramos is looking at me because I'm the lieutenant. So that took away the panic from me, and reliving this it's, okay, I'm Lieutenant Davila, I've got to be a leader.

So I remember -- I go and I yell out, "Who's the boss?" An oriental guy raises his hand. I said, "Well, by order of the City of New York, I'm the boss now. Go in your register, get your money, put it in your pocket." Then I told everybody step back, and I told anybody who tried to open up the door I was going to kick their

ass. I got everybody to the back of the store.

I remember I told the man -- there was two guys that were willing to help. I said, "Just get some stuff, stuff it under the door and try to keep as much debris, or whatever, coming in."

I didn't know what was going on. I know the first building fell and there was shit all over, and I know the second one fell and we were closer to it. I have to honestly say after the first plane hit, I thought there was a chance of me dying. After that first collapse and I was in that building, I thought I was dead. I made it through that and I'm like, oh, fuck.

I tell you, the feelings, again, that I've had, you know what, false pride is unbelievable, things that we have to go through,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] This is what I'm thinking about. But

I was thinking of myself as a corpse already.

Lieutenant Davila died in the line of duty.

I kept these people in the back. They're all hysterical. I'm like, "Shut up. Stop it. You can't control this. Let's try to make it together. Save the oxygen." I was telling them, "Nobody move without me knowing where you're going."

You know what was the funniest thing? I ended up taking off my turnout coat. I took it and I threw it over the counter. The Chinese guy came and took my turnout coat and pulled it on the floor. I'm like, "What the fuck you doing?" He said, "Food, food." I'm like, "Fucking food, there's soot all over this shit." Now I'm mad. I took my fucking thing and I put it back over it. "Fuck you, you jerk."

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. I made him open up the refrigerator, get bottles of water, give it to the people to drink.

We were in there for a while. The time period that we were in there I really don't know. I would probably say maybe 20 minutes or so like

that. Then all of a sudden we start seeing the lights start flickering.

So what I did was I told them to open up the door and I came out. I came out just to look and see what's going on there. I started seeing some people up in the corner. It was much clearer. I guess that's where the avenue opened up, West Broadway, where it was opening up. I think Chase Manhattan Bank is over here.

So what I did was I came back in there. I saw a couple ambulances and stuff. I asked the Oriental guy, "Do you have any towels?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Everybody grab a towel. Wrap it around your face." I had everybody holding hands. I had about 18, 20 people in there. I had everybody hold hands, and I just had them go out the side of the building and just head east.

We came up here, and it was me and Ramos. We came out to sunlight, I saw Bruce Medjuck there. I think I saw Pat Scaringello. Then we started hearing the radio: "Stage in Battery Park or Chambers and West." It would be just sounds and it was horrible. It sounded horrible. I really thought that we had -- EMS

would have a lot more casualties than what it was, because I didn't see them. The thought was devastating.

Then, I forgot, Amy Monroe showed up at the staging area [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Bill Melarango. These people need to be commended. We came in and had to be there. Bill was a station boss. She was out on leave of absence. Then she shows up in a crisp white uniform.

When I got up there, my concern was for Bill, Amy and Alex. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But me and Ramos went nuts going looking for them. Walking back over there, we found Alex. He's okay. We never found Amy. We never found Bill. We went back there looking for them and looking for them and couldn't find them. We thought maybe we lost them.

So again it was me and Ramos. You know, I go to the right guy. I said, well, okay, we've got to regroup. I hear this going on -- and we begin walking. We walked down to Beekman.

Beekman was set up pretty nicely. We waited for patients and stuff like that. There were a couple of patients, but not what they were preparing for. That was really like -- I started thinking, we ain't getting the numbers.

The force of this was so great that there was debris and soot all the way down past South Street.

So I had to do something. We're there. I called it war then. It's really war now. I said, like, okay, I've got to deal with this. What will you do? What am I going to do? I started meeting a couple of people straggling out, some of St. Vincent's units. I'm going, okay, I'm the only one here with any authority.

So they were helping out at the hospital, and I told them to continue. I asked them what they were doing. They just brought a couple patients there. Then one or two of them, their partners were missing, so they were just cross-eyed. I got them in the room, calmed them down, take it easy.

I found this guy Duane Walker, the equipment guy, here. Basically I'm like, "Come

on, fellows." I got Lawrence from communications. I don't know how he ended up getting them. He ended up there with civilian clothes and a shield. I said, "You're going to stay with us too."

Q. Do you know what his last name is?

A. No. I know he's an EMT for -- he works for communications. (Inaudible). He was there.

Ashby, you know about Ashby; right?

Q. Yes.

A. I found out that there was -- I forgot the name of the place now. I go there all the time. But right down Fulton Street -- okay, this is further down. Down by Beekman, down by Fulton and Pearl there's a nursing facility, and they work in conjunction with New York Downtown. I heard they were starting a triage and the treatment center over there.

I took a walk down there to see how they were doing. I spoke to one of the doctors over there. Basically what the doctor at that time told me was that they needed some saline and tubing for eye washing stuff.

So I walked back to hospital 01. I

wasn't going to bring that equipment back over there, because I knew I had to get back to an EMS command. I had to make a decision, I was going to the Battery or I'm going to West and Chambers. So I told them and I got the Cabrini people to go ahead and bring them their supplies. I did that.

Finally I was trying to decide which way I'm going to go, and my decision was I'm going to West and Chambers. My real reason for going to West and Chambers is because I knew my wife was on Church, and in walking I had to go by there, it's just a block by. I actually went by and said I'm here, I'm alive.

Then I left and headed to the command post at West and Chambers. Everything down there was pretty calm. Actually it took a little while to get to West and Chambers and stuff like that still. You're meeting up with people. I found out they had a little staging area already. That's where I met up with Captain Parra.

MR. ECCLESTON: Rene Davila on October 12th, 2001, continuation on side two.

A. Actually prior to meeting up with Parra on Greenwich, after we started crossing Church



the other way, I ended up meeting academy personnel. I met up with a bunch of people from the academy. Captain Gio Pineda was there with a couple other people.

I guess I must have been rowdy because they came both to me and Ramos and looked at us and said, "Come on, get in the bus, I'm not going on no bus. I've got to go work and everything else."

Then the news media started. They found out that I was there, that I was in the Marriott and the first boss there. And Travis was there. Not the captain, the lieutenant.

Q. Barry Travis?

A. Yeah. And Maggiure -- the news media -- that's okay -- I walked away from them. That's when everyone went by and I saw Fern and I started heading towards West and Chambers and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I made it back to West and Chambers.  
That was a good sight. It was a good sight to see all the firefighters and all the firemen and seeing buses from like counties I never heard of. It must have been a couple hours already that passed by.

Then I made it to Stuyvesant School. Again, I'm not -- me and Ramos stuck together. I went there and I said I'm not staying and sitting in an auditorium. Then I was looking for

something to do. I know I was part of it and I wanted to do more. I saw the itch in these poor kids that got there, and they wanted to do something. They were keeping them locked in -- you know why they should have had them standing outside. They were dying.

I remember I made it back out to the street and stuff again, and Chief McCracken came up to me. Chief McCracken saw me, and he said, "I thought you were dead. It's good to see you." That was it. We talked. We did it facing everybody hanging out there. That's all there was.

I'm still looking for Amy and Bill. I finally started -- somebody told me that Amy was at the hospital. I'll tell you a story about that. I don't care how unofficial that is, I (inaudible) on that one. Somebody saw Bill, so I felt a lot better.

Everybody took to their high horse and shit. I have to say that when I got to the command, I see Kowalczyk and everybody looked like they're gummy bears, full of dust, and he was in his crisp white shirt. ██

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Then I saw Stone coming in, and he said, "Rene, what are you doing? I want clipboards and paper pads." I'm like, "You're fucking serious? You want clipboards? I'll get you fucking clipboards. I went to Stuyvesant High School. I'm Puerto Rican. I'm pretty good at something."

I found my way to an office, and I start opening drawers. The secretary's always got a stash. We open drawers and find a bunch of pads. I got him a pad, I got him a fucking pencil sharpener, I got him a fucking ruler, I got him clipboards, I got him everything out of there and said, "Here, mother fucker."

I think McCracken just noticed that I was fucking wild. He ordered me, "I want you to sit down. You're upset." "No." "That's it. Sit down."

That was it. That was basically where I ended up, me and Ramos. Then all of a sudden Ramos kind of collapsed on me, so I got a bus for Ramos. We were married then. He was going to

hospital 01. I'm going to hospital 01 with him. I don't know about what time. I guess it was about 8:30, 9:00 at night.

We get him on a stretcher and into hospital 01. The nurses saw me there, and they grabbed me. I kind of buckled at the knees. They treated me like (inaudible). I still couldn't stand still. I was like, "Get this shit off me."

That's basically my part. That's how my day went. I finally got out of here probably around midnight or so, and I was back up at 4:30 in the morning. I was back here at 6:00 again.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

That's it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add? Any other feelings or anything?

A [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted text]

[REDACTED]

On the EMS side of this, that I'm aware of, there's only two fatalities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I saw people die. I saw people jump  
out of windows, more than I've ever seen in my

life. Let me tell you something else. I'm 51  
fucking years old. I've seen just about fucking  
everything and I've done a lot more. And you  
think about it. We have been able to keep  
ourselves intact.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I'm glad to see my bosses there. I'm glad to have seen McCracken there. I thank them. And Gombo, who I heard almost died in this.

I'm glad to see these guys. I was glad to hear Goldfarb on the radio, Mr. MCI. It was like, okay, here we go. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. You've got a lot to be proud of.

A. EMS didn't do things that bad.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Let me shut up. Thank you.

Q. Thank you today for conducting this interview with us.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 128 hours. The counter on the cassette player is 892 /-FPLT

File No. 9110076

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CAPTAIN MARK STONE

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. STONE

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time now is 850 hours. I'm at Battalion 8. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name rank, title and assignment.

A. Mark Stone, Captain, Commanding Officer, EMS, Battalion 8. Day of incident, unit DC 01.

Q. Also present at this interview is --

A. Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Captain Stone, I would like you to tell us about the events of the morning of September 11, 2001.

A. Well, just before the incident was transmitted, we were preparing to move the station into our new trailers, because they were going to destroy our old station. We were at the trailers when the MERV operator, who was with me, informed me of the incident. He said that a plane hit the World Trade Center.

Q. Can you just tell me the MERV's operator's name?

A. That was Rick Perez. So I was with a member

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of executive administration, Mr. Dave Harney, and all of my equipment would have been located at Division 1 down on pier 36. I asked Dave if he could give me a ride down there. His vehicle doesn't have any lights or sirens, it's a regular sedan, so we jumped in the car and we took off. We were heading down the FDR Drive and listening to it and it seemed pretty chaotic already, the Lieutenant giving his first report, that he wasn't even on the scene, that he saw heavy smoke from the Trade Center.

At one point the Trade Center became visible to me. My first thought was oh, my god, a plane really hit the World Trade Center. I used my cellphone and I called RCC to make sure I was logged onto show me a route to the Trade Center. I called the Division to have my aide for the day-to-day, Gregg Brady, get the truck ready, make sure he had all my equipment so that we were set to go when I got there.

It was interesting later on I don't even know why. I ran upstairs and I grabbed extra cell phone batteries, which I never do. It was pretty interesting. We got in the truck, listening to reports coming in on Citywide and we ended up taking the Battery Park Tunnel underneath to come up on the West



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Street side of the incident. We came up right out of the tunnel. I was looking up to see if I could do a little more initial size up. That is when I saw the second plane hit the building. I just watched it coming in.

I see that the plane hit and I'm really thinking for the safety of the members that we got operating already, Lieutenant D'Avila did a great job. He notified everybody it was a hard hat operation and he started setting up the incident command system for this event, which later on just had to be reworked many times.

Everything was completely grid locked at the mouth of the Battery Tunnel, so I had to get out of the truck at that point. I told my aide when you free it up, park the vehicle and meet me at the command post. I actually walked up from the Battery Tunnel and when I'm walking up, I'm trying to watch what's going on, get a good picture of the area.

Some people, instead of walking along buildings, were in the middle of the street. I directed them to the side. The cops were doing a good job. It was pretty good evacuation going on at that moment. Orderly, there weren't many people who were

M. STONE

hysterical. No patients were presenting themselves south, so things were really moving along.

I got up to the front of the building and took a better look. I heard Lieutenant D'Avila was on the opposite side.

Q. Which building was that?

A. I was approaching number 1 World Trade Center, because that's where I knew he was, on the other side towards Vesey from listening to the radio. I was approaching number 1 World Trade Center, because I was going go into the lobby of the building where the command post was being set up.

I knew there were other officers coming in and there were many senior officers coming in. I wanted to see what I was going to be confronted with before I predetermined in my mind that I would be taking command of the incident.

I'm looking along the buildings and naturally glass and debris is flying from the building, but it was really clear that if you walked along the side of the building, you were fine getting in. There weren't -- naturally everything is a safety issue at that point, but it was really clear going in. If you stayed along the side of the building, you would be okay,

M. STONE

because everything was falling out more into the street.

I made it into the lobby at the command post and Chief Gombo was just arrived as well. We met together really quick and we determined that we would need a few ambulance crews inside and we would start setting up a triage area in the lobby of the building. He asked me to identify a place really quick. There was an area that was set off that wasn't being handled by the command post. It was really at the time we thought a safe location. Who was to know what would happen later.

We went back out and, myself and my aide, Gregg Brady, we identified three crews, two BLS and an ALS crew. I remember specifically that I took 9 Charlie, 7 Nora and 11 x-ray. Thank god that all those guys made it out alive.

Q. Do you remember who the personnel on those units were?

A. I remember that 9 Charlie or 7 Nora. They are both St. Claire's units and 11 x-ray is a Lenox Hill unit. I made sure everybody had helmets because I wouldn't take anybody without one. They did said they did. I know from working with these guys in the field

M. STONE

that they are all working crews, that I took some good crews with us.

I went back into the lobby of the building and my aide was behind me and he came up to me and he said Cap, they are concerned about coming into the building. I told him, I said, at this point, you know, orders only go so far. I told him go back. If they don't want to come into the building, if they have any hesitation, go get me three crews that will come into the building. It's sort of fruitless to start ordering people at that point.

We just find the volunteers that we can and it turns out they all came in. We had the crews and then in speaking to Chief Gombo, I don't know how he came up with it, but he said go scout out 7 World Trade Center for me over by OEM. They want to set up a triage over there.

Rather than go back out through the buildings, which I knew what we were facing safety wise, we went through the complex and we came out on Vesey Street right opposite 7 World Trade Center. We made it into the lobby. There was no problem at that point. We found out that 7 World Trade Center houses OEM and Secret Service and a bunch of other agencies,

M. STONE

but they were all evacuated at that point.

They shut down the command center and they were evacuating OEM. Everybody felt it was pretty safe to be in the lobby of the building. At that time I met Chief Peruggia, Captain Abdo Nahmod, and Richard Zarrillo, who is the special events coordinator for Chief Peruggia. I spoke with Chief Peruggia real quick and I left the crews with him and he told me to go report back to Chief Gombo.

The interesting thing to that is when I talked to John later on, a couple days later, if I would have stayed one second later and talked to him another second, I would have been in the lobby when the building collapsed. Or if I would have left him a second earlier, I would have been standing next to Chief Ganci when the building collapsed. There is a whole bunch of fate going on here.

I went back through the lobby of the building and we were met with a Secret Service agent who was just physically exhausted from running up the buildings. I told him now is not the time to be exhausted because he thought that he was going to be a patient. I told him if you can evacuate yourself, evacuate yourself. Everybody was out of the building.

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I made sure there was nobody from EMS still in the lobby because we were moving our entire operation. I was the last one out of 1 World Trade Center.

I made it about halfway across West Street and I was just stepping into the street off the center median when I heard what is going to be instilled in my memory forever; a sound that combines a railroad car, an airplane, a fighter jet and thunder. I looked up and I saw the World Trade Center falling down. Number 1 World Trade Center was coming down. Number 2, I couldn't even really be sure at that point. One of the buildings was falling on my head. I said oh, my god. You really only had a split second to make a decision. I could have ran left, I could have ran right, which would have been north or south on West Street, but I looked right in front of me and I was looking at the command post where I saw all the senior Chiefs. I saw Chief Kowalczyk. I saw Chief Gombo and there was, in the American Express building, in the World Financial Center, there was actually an underground garage and I don't know why I chose that garage, but I chose to run straight ahead for the garage. I must have made it in -- I don't know whether I was in 10, 20, 30, 50, 100 feet. I know I wasn't in far, but all of a sudden just

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a woosh and a thrush, just, I started getting hit by debris. I got picked up and started being thrown. We were tripping over each other; firemen, Chiefs, Captains, Lieutenants, EMTs. I don't know if there were any EMTs, I should not say that.

We just got thrown, and everything went black and it was almost silent. Right at that moment I saw my two kids. I saw my father who passed away. I was actually in the air flying along and it was only, I guess, maybe a second, and I said to myself my god, that's it, it's over, because it was black and it was silent.

Then I hit the ground. Then stuff was just piling on top of me. As soon as I hit, I fell on my shoulder. I got an excruciating pain. So I said to myself -- this is all within a second this is going on through my mind. I said to myself, I said, you are not dead because there is no pain in heaven. I feel this excruciating pain running down my arm. Now I'm getting hit in the back of my head and everything and thank god I had my helmet on.

Another interesting thing was that I wore my turnout coat that day. I don't wear my turnout coat too often. Forever I will wear my turnout coat every

M. STONE

day. I wore my turnout coat, so everything was just hitting me in the back. I said all right I'm not dead, because I'm not in heaven. Then I said wait a second. Maybe I'm in hell. Right at that moment I just decided there's no way I'm staying in hell. I don't belong here. I just stayed down for another few seconds. I know that was a conscious decision I made just to stay down and try and let things subside a little bit.

It was still pitch black. Dust was flying. I couldn't breathe at that point. I couldn't see anything. I couldn't hear anybody else around me, so I'm just assuming that there really is nobody else around me, that, you know, the worst has come. I didn't want to come to that realization yet. While I'm thinking it, I didn't want to believe it.

I waited another few seconds and then I -- it was sort of like it subsided a little bit, because I didn't hear any more rumble, but it was still quiet. I managed to get up, clean some stuff off me and start figuring that I had to search my way out of here. I think of a few things really quick. Back to years and years and years ago when I went to basic fire training in Suffolk County Fire Academy, I said you know what I got to do. The first thing I got to do is I got to



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breathe, otherwise I will be dead in no time. So I actually took my head and I took my turnout coat and I disengaged. I pulled the snaps off and I disengaged my liner and everybody always made fun of me because I always left my full liner in the coat even in the summer. I disengaged the liner and I actually used that to shield me to breathe. Probably one of the two things that saved my life.

The other was after we started going I remembered that coming from SOD, you always had Nomex hoods, because when we suited up we had to wear hoods. I said, well, I got my hood in my pocket. I pulled my hood out and I used that also. So I had at that point, which was a double filter, to allow me to breathe. So it had to be like -- I'm estimating, probably another 10 minutes, that I couldn't find anybody. I was just -- I guess sort of just wandering around in there, just trying to find my way out.

Then I saw a light and it was a fireman. He was calling out to people. I said yes, I'm over here. Now it's just the two of us. We started moving down. We made a pact that we were both getting out of there alive. I don't know who this guy was. I believe that he saved my life, because without that light, without

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the two of us reassuring each other, I'm not quite sure I would have made it out of there. I would love to know who he was. The two of us together, we said we stay together no matter what happens.

Another few minutes later we found another firefighter, another firefighter. Nobody was injured. My shoulder wasn't really a concern at that point. I had sprained my knee, I had hurt my shoulder, but that wasn't like a concern. We found a few more guys. I don't know how long it was. It was a while, but everything was still pitch black. Nobody could breathe down there. A few firefighters had masks. They were passing them off to help some people out. Some firemen didn't have masks. There was a real spirit of -- this was at the time like 5 or 6 guys, that we were just fighting for our lives.

I don't know, it could have been two minutes, it could have been two hours. It could have been 20 minutes. Best guess that I can imagine was like 20 minutes. We searched our way and we had an orderly search that we all just held on to each other and we found a wall and we essentially just searched our way out of the building.

These guys, everybody just sort of fell back

M. STONE

to training that they had learned over the years and you know, that's how we searched our way out of there. We found a stairwell and then we found a whole bunch of more firefighters. I guess it was about 20 of us then.

Q. The stairwell, was this lit and everything?

A. Yes, actually that was the only thing that was lit, which was pretty strange. I imagine from the emergency lighting. So we walked up and the door -- I think they said it had to be forced. I wasn't sure, because we were in the stairwell for a minute. We were talking to each other and we said, you all right, you all right, you all right.

We made it out of the stairwell. It led us right out, I want to say that we were -- we actually came out the back of the Financial Center, because I was looking at the Hudson at that point. That's where we walked, just right to the water, which wasn't far.

At that point I said out loud, I said, okay, let me get my thoughts together. We got to go back to work. One of the firemen looked at me and he said are you stupid. I said yes. In this case I must be. I remembered clearly at that point -- I mean some people were jumping on boats at that point, because there were boats lined up along the Hudson. People were just

M. STONE

jumping on boats and I thought of doing that at a point.

But I remember specifically that I remembered Chief Kowalczyk, that I left -- that he was the last person that I really physically saw. I ended up making my way back to Vesey Street. I was actually over at West End Avenue. Is that West End?

Q. North End?

A. North End, right. I was at North End Avenue and Vesey Street, where I met with Chief Goldfarb. At that point we didn't know really what the outcome of this whole thing was going to be, but we decided real quick that we needed to put together a plan because there is still a monumental incident ahead of us. I was just trying to keep my composure at that point, because I still had a job to do. Being a Captain, there are still many people that are under me who are going to look to me for guidance and support. There is also Chiefs that really need me to function.

So I took a few seconds, I took a few deep breaths and I told Chief Goldfarb that I remember leaving Chief Kowalczyk and I need to go back and find him, because we still haven't seen him. Again the time frame wasn't much after the building collapsed. Still

M. STONE

I don't even remember which one collapsed first. I'm sort of, I guess to this point, one and two was immaterial. It was one of the towers. I believe it was two that came down first, because right after that, I told Chief Goldfarb, I am going back to find Chief Kowalczyk. I know where I left him. I know where he should have been, because we still haven't seen him. We haven't heard from him.

At that point my aide, who I'm thinking all along, because he was behind me, collapsed and I didn't know. I just assumed that he was dead. That -- you know, now I am by myself. He popped up and then there was a quick moment of embrace, hugging and again praying to god at that point. Like someone said, there were no atheists down at Ground Zero.

I said okay. Now we are going to go find Chief Kowalczyk. We went back around and I was standing in the corner of West Street and Vesey Street where I met Chief Basile, Chief Cassano, Chief Hayden, Chief Pfeifer, Chief Pfeifer from the first, Chief Hayden, Fire Division 1 commander, Chief Basile, EMS Division 2 commander. Chief Cassano at the time was the Citywide Tour Commander. We were briefly speaking for a second.

M. STONE

We were standing in the corner of West Street and Vesey Street, and I heard that rumble again, that roar, that thunder, and I said dear god, I almost died once. God can't be letting this happen to me again. I looked up. This is how I know 2 fell first. I looked up and it was happening again. 1 World Trade Center was falling on my head now.

I said holy cow, this really can't be happening. Again you have that decision, do I run north on West Street or do I run to the water. I said screw this, I'm just -- I'm going for a swim in the Hudson. That's where I'm going to run. It hit this time, but the difference was when it hit was because we were outside, it was just a deep dark gray rather than pitch black. Things were hitting us, but it was more dust, just more of the construction dust at this point.

I was still running but I couldn't see and we were tripping and while we were running, I thought I lost Chief Basile this time because we were running side by side. I later found out that he actually ducked into a doorway, but I just kept running until I hit North End Avenue again and then all I did was I just took a sharp right and it all just sort of just

M. STONE

passed me. I was standing there almost in the clear. Everything was much thinner, the dust and you could breathe over there.

We were sort of safe at that point. That's when Chief Kowalczyk emerged. He had come around from the other side. Chief Gombo was there. Chief Basile was there. We found out that he ducked into the doorway. We were all sort of reassembling then. We were going to start moving up to Stuyvesant High School, and I said to him, I said I don't think that's far enough north for us. I said we really need to move this thing north.

We all just kicked around where we were going to go. I said why don't we just go up to the piers. It's wide open, and Chief Gombo agreed that that would be a good plan, that we could start reassembling up there and try to figure out who was dead or alive, because we knew there were going to be numerous deaths at that point.

You are running into so many people during the time through the whole thing. I mean I can't even really remember how many people I saw. At that point we started -- the MERV was over at North End Avenue and Vesey. I don't even remember the building number. I

M. STONE

think it was a hotel actually. We started putting together a triage area over there and we ended up moving it. MERV relocated.

I walked up towards Murray Street and then I walked up to the West Side Highway and I just turned around and looked back at the Trade Center and I said oh, my god, because I'm sure that everybody has heard a million times, whoever in their right mind would have thought that the World Trade Center would ever fall down.

I was at the first one, the first incident in '93. I think we were all lulled into really a false sense of security that they couldn't take it down with a bomb, that this would never happen. A lot of emotion hit me at that point. I saw Rabbi Birnhack at that point. He said a prayer for me.

I started walking north on West Street. I didn't know how far I was going to go, but I was -- I just didn't know what I was going to do at that point. I didn't know what my thoughts were. I was just sort of in a daze. Two 110 story buildings fell on my head so to speak. I was trapped before. I don't like using the word trapped because the fallen firefighters, police officers, they are trapped, and they are dead.



M. STONE

That's not a good word. I was just entangled for a little while. Then I was able to thank god extricate myself from, you know. I mean I lost a lot of friends, a lot of people I worked with over the years, coming from SOD. I worked with a lot of guys in specialty units. Being in Manhattan I worked with a lot of guys. The names of -- you work with all the Battalion Chiefs and all the first line Battalion Chiefs who got killed. Terry Hatton, from Rescue 1 who I know for many years, he got killed. There were many other guys, Dennis Mojica, all the rest from Rescue 1 who we deal with on a regular basis, because being a Captain, a lot of first line supervisors deal with Engine companies, but I knew these guys. I know a lot of these guys. Couple of guys I grew up with.

One happens to be a police officer, Joe Viggiano, who was in truck 2. His brother John Viggiano was a Firefighter in Ladder 132. They are both still missing. Just a tremendous amount of people that I would find out about later. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]).

[REDACTED]

I was with my aide Gregg. We were just

M. STONE

walking north. He says what are we going to do. I said I don't know, just give me a few minutes. I got to get a few minutes. I just got to put this together in my head.

Then I met with Chief Hirth, who is Division 1 commander and Grace Cacciola, Lieutenant in the Division, were in the Academy or so I thought, in refresher. Right at that moment they appeared. I just grabbed Grace and I hugged him. We both cried. I didn't know they were there, they thought I was dead. Because just my personality and where I have been in SOD, they assumed that I was in the building. The only reason I got out was God has determined that it's not my time yet.

We just held onto each other for a few minutes. Then we said okay. What are we going to do. It was time to head up to the piers. We started regrouping. We head up to the piers and they started putting things together. At that point I was pretty well limping because my knee was hurting me and my shoulder. I was still in a lot of pain. So Chief Hirth actually ended up driving me in a command car. We had a command car. He drove me over to Bellevue Hospital where I was evaluated. We found out nothing

M. STONE

was broken. It was some just sprains and stuff. They took a chest x-ray because I must have eaten 50 or a hundred pounds of construction dust, asbestos, and everything else that was in the air that day.

They said -- Bellevue signed me off from work. I said that's great, but there is still a monumental job to do. I mean we weren't even close to getting a hand on anything at that point. So I took a few minutes. I washed my face. I cleaned myself up. I put my turnout coat and helmet on. Back to the Trade Center I went.

That was pretty much the morning. I was there probably until 4:30, quarter to 5 the next morning, at which time I was released. That's the morning of September 11. Ironically, that's my sister's birthday. She is a police officer. She was off that day, thank God. Her birthday is never going to be the same, which is just -- we are two years and 51 weeks apart. My birthday is a week later and it was a big thing.

I got home that morning and after I got on to West Street, early, before we walked down to Chelsea and I went to the hospital, a few interesting things happened. Everything happens for a reason, fate. My

M. STONE

wife, who is a Lieutenant on our job, she is EMS Lieutenant, she knew that I was there. Right after the first building collapsed, I picked up my cell phone along with that 450 trillion other people and nobody could get any cell sites and I said I got to try at least to let her know that I'm okay, because I'm sure she was going to be panicking.

My cell phone went through the first time. It happened again the second time and I called her and I said I'm okay the second time. My son was playing and I said don't bother him. We walked up to West Street, right after I saw Grace and I called my wife back and I said I need to talk to my son. He is just coming up on 3 years old. I said I need to talk to him and he is so innocent to the world and he just said, he said Daddy, what are you doing. I said to him, I said Daddy's at work now, but you know I love you. He said okay Daddy, I will see you later.

That was -- I have another son who is six months old, so I couldn't talk to him, but that's what got me through. That's what got me through. He still asks me every day, he says you know, is Daddy going to work. I says yes, Daddy is going to work. He says you coming home? And he knows. He knows that something

M. STONE

happened.

I'm not quite sure he knows what and I pray to God that he never ever has to know for many years. God is good all the time. God brought me home to my boys. We go on. There was a lot of other stuff, reactions of people, direction that was given. Just happened to find out that the three initial crews that I brought in made it out. People that were closer made it out.

I did see Carlos Lillo for a while. I remember he was looking for his wife. The last I saw him, he was still looking for her. He was outside somewhere. I don't remember exactly where I saw him, but I remember I talked to him because I happen to know him, because my wife worked with him at a station years ago. I pray for him and his family and Ricardo's family, all the other families. I pray for them every day.

It's just as a field commander, you play over the decisions you make every day. Did I make the right decision. I played it over a million times in my head and I said, I keep saying to myself I don't think given the same scenario tomorrow everything that I know in all my years of training, my command experience, what

M. STONE

would I have done differently. I can't come up with anything, I don't think.

Nobody in the world, nobody ever would ever have thought these buildings were coming down. That's what we do. We go to lobbies and do triage and upper floors and do forward triage. We just make decisions. I hope I made good decisions. I know that thank God, nobody who was under my command that day suffered any ill effects. I know because I researched that everybody went home okay at the end of the day. That was pretty important to me.

There's a lot of other things that go through my head, but that's pretty much the bulk of what went on that morning.

Q. Anything else you want to add, any final thoughts?

A. No, I just -- every day I just pray that this new war on terrorism -- I pray to God that our President, President Bush, gets us through this. Mayor Giuliani did a fantastic job, still does a fantastic job, I pray for our Commissioner, who is tired himself. I see him every day on TV. I have seen him a few times in person since then. He is a tired man, but he has given everything. There is nothing more that he

M. STONE

can give and I just pray that God gives him  
-- continues to give him the strength.

Chief Nigro, who is now our Chief of the Department. Chief Cassano, Chief of Operations, Chief McCracken, Chief of EMS, I just pray that they continue to have the strength to take us through these really tough times. That senior officials. I knew Chief Ganci. He knew me. Not so much on a personal level but more professional. That I pray for their families, Commissioner Feehan, Chief Feehan. Recently with them just a week before, at a dedication for the Central Synagogue that was burned down a few years ago. Chief Burns. All the Chiefs, I pray that God gives them strength to take us forward and that if there was anything that could have tipped us off that this was going to happen, we find it and that we learn from it. I don't see any mistakes. We just have the strength as leaders; myself, that we go forward.

Good leaders and good commanders and God gives us that strength. So we will get through this. I'm sure we will. I just hope that history looks kindly on us. A lot of people and I don't even really include myself, but a lot of people. I saw strong men have to cry that day. I see strong leaders who are the

M. STONE

rock of this organization who are the backbone of this organization, get tired.

I just -- I pray God gives them a little break, that they can take a breath and step back and just get a break. They all need it. They are tired. They give their all. I just hope they find some peace and rest.

I guess that's about it.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Okay. That concludes our interview with Captain Mark Stone. Thank you for your time. The time is now 926 hours.



File No. 9110077

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF ULYSSES GRANT

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 12th. The time is 1318 hours. I'm Mike Tambasco of the World Trade Center Task Force conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. We'll be conducting this interview with Chief Grant.

Chief, would you just be good enough to identify yourself and your command?

CHIEF GRANT: My name is Chief Ulysses Grant. I'm currently assigned to the Fire Department EMS Bureau, EMS Division 5.

MR. TAMBASCO: We're in the conference room of EMS Battalion 43.

Q. Chief, if you would just be good enough to give me your memory of the events.

A. To the best of my recollection, it started out to be a normal day for me and my aide. Basically we were at Staten Island. I was doing some administrative work. And I believe the young lady that works also there with us, Ms. Alice Suskowitz came in while I was in my office and said Chief, did you hear, a plane just went into a building at the World Trade Center.

I said what?

I'm in my office. I have a television. I turn it on. Sure enough, there was coverage of the World Trade Center being struck with an airplane. We were all watching.

My next thing was to a little more carefully monitor the citywide radio. I could hear a lot of radio transmissions over the air. I didn't necessarily associate it with a person, but I could hear there was a lot of talking going over the citywide radio.

A combination of listening to the radio and watching the events as they unfolded on television, I said you know what, I've got to make a decision here, it's either to go to the event or, knowing the magnitude of this type of event, maybe my resources might be needed at headquarters or something of that nature. I made the decision to go to the event.

Surprisingly we got there very quickly. I think probably what assisted that was the HOV lane on the BQE where you can jump right in and make better egress in getting there. The other thing that I remember was that at some points

along that HOV route there were police officers there, I guess in an effort to direct traffic for an event that had already taken place.

So we got there relatively quickly. I remember we got as far as we could and got out of the Battery Tunnel. I remember there was a large number of police officers right as we got to the end of the Battery Tunnel, waving us on, come on, come on. We got through the tunnel.

I remember we got to a point as close as we could, and there were other emergency vehicles responding. We got north to west. What I remember is all of a sudden there was someone like pushing us back saying go back, go back. I don't think that was in reference to either the towers falling at that point; however, reference to maybe some debris that was coming down over in that area.

So we pulled back as far as we could, and we got out and pulled on our turnout jackets, helmets, made sure we had radios, helmets, cell phones, whatever normally we would take to an MCI response.

I remember as I was walking up I

noticed Chief McCracken several feet ahead of me walking as well with his lieutenant. Lieutenant Cronin was also there.

Q. That was up West Street?

A. Walking up West. We were walking up. You know you could see what was going on and we were going in that direction. We got to a point where we saw several municipal ambulances there, Hazollah members were there and there were all sorts of voluntaries. I'm not quite sure which ones they were.

At that point Chief McCracken had given me some directions to start setting up a treatment center, because we knew the resources we had. And we were going over some of the safety issues like making sure people stay together, making sure what officers we have, taking on certain roles. As a matter of fact, Captain D'Amato was there also. He had been there a while.

Q. Chief, could I just interrupt and ask you whereabouts was that, where this took place?

A. One of the points that I remember was that Chief McCracken actually asked what street

we're on. At that point we looked and the street sign was indicating South End. The other street sign wasn't necessarily visible. However, I think, you know, just looking at surroundings and looking at this map, it was probably Liberty or in that vicinity, one block over.

Q. Great.

A. Chief McCracken was discussing about setting up this treatment sector. Basically we agreed to move it somewhat further back. I was walking with some of the Hazollah or the chief representative of Hazollah to explain to him that the people should stay together, let it be you that I communicate with as responsible for Hazollah, let it be Captain D'Amato for the municipal and voluntary resources and so forth. So we were in the process of doing that.

The next thing I remember is I saw people running in my direction, not even a full walk up but just people running. I said what the hell, what are they running from? I didn't have a clue there.

People talk about -- you know since the incident they talk about hearing this loud

thunderous sound. To the best of my knowledge, I don't remember hearing anything. However, I do remember seeing this loud, large cloud coming about like it was turning a corner and coming in my direction.

So I also turned and ran. What I remember seeing when I was running was a Hazollah truck. It was open. The back of the truck was open. Not that I had full conscious coherence of what was going on, but I said you know what, let me duck in here because there's stuff coming down from somewhere. Let me duck in here.

So I jumped in the back of the truck. There were other people there that jumped in the back of the vehicle with me. I remember it immediately filling up with stuff and you hear the tingling of the particles and whatever it was that was coming down, just filling it up, filling it up. At some point I couldn't even see in front of me.

I do remember someone kicking at the door trying to get the door of the vehicle open. There was a problem in opening it, but it eventually opened. There was someone in front of

me. I was feeling my way. And I latched onto their belt in the back. To be quite honest, I wasn't letting go because I couldn't see. I had no concept of what was going on. I just held onto that person.

He went forward; I was right behind him. Within a few -- I don't know, maybe 30 feet or whatever it might have been, we more or less fell into a building. It seems like we just fell into a building, rolled in. We all were covered with dust. I had no idea still what the hell was going on here.

I remember a young -- it looked like a young black woman. She looked like she was a secretary of some sort. A gentleman was at his desk working, like where did you people come from? We just stumbled in.

I remember being very confused, not knowing what happened and anyone that was around me, I no longer saw. So one of my first thoughts is where the heck is my aide? Where is she? She was here a few minutes ago. Where is she? And the people around me, where are they? What happened?



The dust settled somewhat. I started -- there was a Hazollah member there. He started brushing his clothes off and trying to get rid of some of the debris on his helmet and clothes. Then I remember saying wait a minute, we can't stay here. I don't see anybody I know. It's not a good idea, I don't think, to stay here. We've got to move on.

I wasn't sure if that was the right thing to do, but I decided to go out. And as I went out, I walked several feet and I remember now meeting an EMT who I now identify as an EMT that works for me out at Battalion 22, Rothmund. And he said Chief, I don't know, where are you going? I said we've got to go. We can't stay here. We've got to go. He said well, if you're going to go -- and he gave me a bottle of water and some paper towels. He said wet these down and cover your mouth if you're going to go.

I traveled a little further, wandered up into this deli. I remember seeing fruit around, the people not comfortable with what was going around. The owner was there, but there was a lot of confusion. I stayed there very

momentarily, found out where the exit was to get out of there, and moved on.

The next thing I know I found myself over in what I believe now was the Battery Park area. We were there. A lot of people had begun to gather. I remember someone walking up behind me who later was identified as Lieutenant Cronin. I said where's Chief McCracken? She said right now I don't really know. I said where are you going? She said Chief, I'm following you.

So we walked a little bit. There were a large number of people there. One of the things I distinctly remember was that Al Simons, who was the supervisor of Maimonides Hospital, had also been hurt and he was on a stretcher. There were several members of Hazollah working to get him out of the location of where we were.

It was a small boat, if you will, that approached at the water. However, I'm looking over it and looking at what they were trying to do. I saw it was at least 30 feet separating him on the stretcher and being able to go into the boat. I remember distinctly telling them: You can't do this, no, no, don't lower him in there,

don't even think about it. So they brought him out.

I then saw Chief McCracken. He was coming around and he was speaking. What I do remember is I said to him: Chief, what do we do now? What are we going to do? He said you can't go anywhere. I said we can't stay here. He said look over there. If you look back there, you could see the large dust and debris falling from the first tower. The only other thing you could see was the water. We weren't going in either direction.

So we were there. Then I remember the people that were around me were very panicky. There were a lot of civilians that were very panicky. What they had told them to do was lay down, cover your heads and remain calm. It seems like they followed that direction because we were the only ones giving any directions.

So they basically followed. They laid down, and they were crying and very upset. I remember a lady next to me being very upset and saying we're going to die, we're going to die. I said we're not going to die; we're going to be

okay.

There then was a larger vessel -- I don't know if it was one of the ferries or not -- that came close and someone there of authority made the decision that it should be women and children first to get on the boat and go. It sort of like reminded me of the movie the Titanic, and that's what it felt like.

What we were doing at that point was looking in the crowd and calling up women that we saw with children or whatever, and we were putting them on. We were handing them over to the guys that were on the other end of the boat, putting them on.

We did that for several minutes. I remember a woman that looked like she was either Latino or Hispanic but, somewhat bewildered. You could see that there was a communication gap with her and what was going on. So I went a little bit into the crowd, and I pulled the woman with the baby carriage out and got her on.

All this time there were people pressing up real tight against me, against me real tight. I remember that. So I went after

that was done and I sat down. It was like a little bench area, not benches but a grass area with some sort of cement covering. I sat there for a while.

I started being short of breath. I just was gasping for air, gasping. I sat there, figuring the best thing to do at that point was just be still for right now.

I heard like a noise coming up out behind me, and it was a Lutheran ambulance that came out of nowhere. And they proceeded to load Al Simons, who was the supervisor for Maimonides. I remember another gentleman sitting in the ambulance who had an apparent leg injury, and it was starting to throb and hurt.

There was a big, heavysset paramedic, white pants, blue shirts, very stocky guy, and another person. Someone said Chief, you've got to go. You've got to get up in here. They more or less pulled me up into the back of the truck. We started out slowly.

I was under the impression, I guess obviously with other people in here, we were going to the hospital. We got out. We were all

in confusion there. I could see the guy being flagged on. They gave me oxygen and had me sit in the corner.

We got into the Battery Tunnel, and the ambulance began to overheat because the guy was slowing down. The Battery Tunnel was at that point full of all of the smoke and whatever else was coming in. I could see it just coming in. The guy, you know, he had to shut down the AC because it was overheating.

Al Simon yelled at him: Keep going, keep going, keep going, don't stop. Meanwhile I don't think he supervised the Lutheran guys, but he yelled keep going, keep going. We got out of the tunnel, and the next thing you know not long after we were at Lutheran Hospital. They threw oxygen on me there. I had a couple of them see me. I told them I'm fine. I'm just having a problem breathing, but I feel a lot better, I feel a lot better.

I settled down. I saw Bill Killeps, who was the ambulance supervisor at Lutheran, a little later on. He offered me some help or whatever the case.

I remember seeing he looked like a priest or a fellow at the phone, one of the phone booths near the treat -- I guess it's the asthma treatment area. It looked like he got through on the phone.

As soon as he hung up, I jumped up, because my impulse was to call my wife and let her know that I'm here, I'm okay, because I know she would be watching the news or heard about it and things were going to go through her head. So I said even if she just hears my voice she will settle down.

So I was able to call out. I got through. Settled her down. I'm all right. I'll be here. I couldn't see very well. In fact, I needed to flush my eyes at some point. After I felt better, they took the oxygen off, basically said, okay, Chief, go on.

I wandered outside. They were periodically bringing people in from the event. There was a park across the street, and no one was in the park. They had cordoned it off, quarantined it off. I went into the park and sat down just to get my thoughts.

All along one of the things -- I did have my cell phone. I had not accounted for my aide yet. So I called her home, and I guess it was fortunate that I got no answer, because sometimes her daughter is home. Fortunately I got no answer, because I guess I wanted to know where was she, but I didn't know and it would only be frightening for me to say well, I, her supervisor, don't know where she is.

So I called her division and I spoke with Alice who's there, the PAA. She said oh, Chief, you're okay. I said I'm going to be okay. Have you heard from Mary, my aide. She said Chief, we haven't heard from her. I said my phone's working, my pager seems to be working. I was getting pages.

I sat in that park for a while, just kept flushing my eyes with water. There was an ambulance crew that gave me some water. I kept flushing my eyes out, like that. I finally got a page from Alice. I called her. She said Chief, we found Mary. I said thank God.

So I said where is she? She said stay there, she's going to come pick you up. I said



how the hell is she going to pick me up? In what? What is she going to pick me up in? I thought for sure the car was destroyed.

So sure enough, I guess about 40 minutes later, here she comes pulling up in the car, looking like crap, all kind of shit on it, and she comes out, all dusted up. I said thank God you're okay. I got in the car, went in and washed off in one of the other areas at one of the battalions.

And that was the day, a very unforgettable day.

Q. Unforgettable, I'm sure.

A. I think back many times and I consider all of the other things going on in my life right now and I said God was on my side this day and I should be thankful for that. It was really some experience. I'll never forget it. I'm sure I'm not the only person. I hope that things work out.

Q. All right, Chief. I thank you. Is there anything else you can think of you'd like to add to that?

A. No, I think that pretty much covers --

summarizes that day. I don't remember looking directly at the buildings coming down. I know that when we first got there that day. I saw what I thought was a rag or something falling off one of the buildings. The person standing next to me said Chief, that's a person. But you could see it was burning.

But I remember distinctly people just running, running, wondering what's going on. Then it wasn't long after that there was debris and stuff coming down from the World Trade Center had descended upon us. The only choice was to run. I don't think it was a question of saying what do I do next.

The only option was to run at that point and take cover. That's what I believe most people did. I guess some had more advantage being either closer to a building or a place where they could get into, and some of us were just left wide out in the open.

There was a Hazollah truck, and I remember diving in there and some other people dove in with me, still not knowing what was going on around us.

So I'm thankful and thank God I'm here today. I thank God for the people who have survived it. My heart and thoughts go out to those who didn't because those people came to work that day, whether they were civilians or firemen or EMS workers, not knowing what to expect, certainly no expectation of losing their life that day. I guess it's just the will of God. That's about it.

Q. Once again, Chief, I thank you.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview is concluded at 1337 hours.

File No. 9110078

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

MARY MCMILLAN

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. McMILLAN

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 12. My name is Mike Tambasco. Assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We are conducting an interview today into the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center. The time of the interview starting is at 1254 hours.

Q. Our interview today is with --

A. Mary McMillan. I was assigned with Chief Grant, car 65 on 9-11. We parked our car on the West Side Highway.

Q. If I could ask you, could you start with when you first heard about what was going on, when you were responding?

A. Okay. We were at Division 5 on Staten Island. They heard the call, Joe LaBarbera, who was (inaudible). He heard the call and the Chief was listening to it also. He said Mary get your coat and let's go. So we left. I was driving.

We followed -- took the BQE to the tunnel and parked on the West Side Highway. Someone told us don't come any further, stay where you are, and we did. There were other cars behind me. We couldn't go any further, so we got out and walked over to the command post, where we met Chief McCracken. I believe that was

M. McMILLAN

at South End and Liberty Street.

While I was there I was asked by Chief Grant to gather a list of resources. I didn't have a piece of paper with me, so I got it from Kathleen Zarr. I met her and I met also Mala Harrilal and Brian Pastore. I don't recall who else I seen there at that time.

As I was gathering it, I was saying to Mala, that I'm looking up at the building and I said to her, this is going to fall. I said we should get out of here. This is going to fall. She says I know. I think we are in the wrong place. I tried to tell Chief Grant and Chief McCracken I think it's going to fall, but they were so busy talking among themselves, I didn't have a chance to tell them what I was feeling.

I think I should have shared with everyone, but when I felt that way, I looked around me. I gathered the resources, but I'm thinking what do I do when this thing falls. I looked around me and I saw this building on my right. It had the glass bottom doors and I just made reference to it in case god forbid, anything happened, my plan would be to run behind that building, grab my jacket over my head and just stay there for a while.

M. McMILLAN

Sure enough, after my thoughts travelled through my head, all I heard was run and I heard the sound, a sound -- I can't really describe it. It was an unusual sound. Then they are saying run, so I started to run and I looked back and I saw this white smoke just moving in this boiling motion towards us and I was like oh, my god, what's going on. I was scared, I was frightened and I'm running and everybody's running.

Someone grabbed on to my hands. I don't know who it is. I was dragged, literally dragged on the ground. I said let me go please. Let me go. Let me go. So he let me go. I got up on my feet and he said get the fuck in here now. I went in there. I didn't want to go in there because I'm thinking this thing that's falling down is going to crash the glass that surrounds this building.

So we got under there and I just broke down in tears, and the debris, I was covered in debris at that time. I ran inside and they closed the door. I stood by some console table. I took my helmet off and I said oh, my god we are going to die. We are going to die. I was so afraid and then they said shut up. Shut up. Stop saying that.

M. McMILLAN

Then it calmed down somewhat and everybody started leaving the building. Now we are not making any friends, everybody is just trying to get out. I was like oh, my god. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I don't think they had a plan. What's going on with them.

Q. You lost sight of them completely?

A. Yes. So when I got out I walked, looking in the area where I left them. Because I didn't look back or anything. I just ran and I didn't see anyone. Everybody is looking for everybody. Everybody is covered in this white dust. You can't breathe. You could hardly see. You are looking for water. There were people out there giving you bottles of water. They said wash your face, wash your hands. It felt like something was sticking you when you washed your face. I guess little pieces of glass, because when I got home also. When I washed my face. There was something sticking me. Like glass in my face.

So I got the water and I washed my face and my hands and I started looking for them. I walked up South End I believe. I was walking in the opposite direction now and I saw Chief McCracken approaching me. I said where is Chief Grant. He said oh, he is in



M. McMILLAN

the store down the block. Just a couple of stores down. Just keep walking.

So I decided to walk just to look for him and I looked in every building I passed. I didn't see him. I just saw a lot of people. I don't recall who I saw. I asked them if they had seen Chief Grant. Everybody is no, no, I didn't see him. I don't know.

So I walked further, further back and forth, back where I was, further, looking around and up the stairs to some store above there. They says come, wash your face off. I said I'm fine. I'm good. Leave me alone. They gave me water. I took the water and says here, you need a mask, take a mask, they gave me a mask and I put that on and that helped so much. That mask helped me out.

Then I walked over to -- going towards the water, because everybody says get towards the water. It's better over there. So I started to walk towards the water and I walked up and down looking for him. I said anybody seen -- I asked, because I think I seen everybody who I met there initially except Chief Grant. Then I walked around the water and I saw Kathleen Zarr again and she says let's go in this building and set up triage for anyone with asthma,

M. McMILLAN

which she did.

I met Captain D'Amato. I met him and he looked so out of it, like he wasn't there.

Q. Dazed?

A. Dazed. I said to him let me borrow your radio and I intercepted transmission asking for Chief Grant. I didn't know where he was and he says take it. I said are you okay? Didn't answer me. Just sat there in a daze. They did triage and the next thing you know we saw a boat coming in and they says get back in the building, because the other building was coming down now. This big ball of smoke overcame the building again and we stayed inside there and did the triage. We tried to make some sense of what's going on. Everybody is talking and confused, people with their children, with their dogs and their family and the boats started to come closer to the water.

I don't know where I was then. But the boats came over. There is a place.

Q. I think there is a little dock.

A. At a corner, a very corner, like a corner, corner, and a building is here and the water is circulating here. And there is a corner. People could walk down towards like --

M. McMILLAN

Q. Like a pier?

A. Like a pier. Walk down towards it and then the boats were there and we directed the people to get on to the boats.

Q. It was civilians, it was everybody?

A. Civilians, people from the building, children, anybody who wanted to get out of there. After that I saw Chief McCracken again. I said did you see Chief Grant. He said no. I said have you seen him at all. He said yes, I saw him. He's down that way. He is okay. He is okay. I think that I was just being pacified at that moment, because I don't think he seen him, but when I met Chief Grant he told me he did see him one time.

After that I saw -- who was it? I don't recall who it was that drove me on the gator, that drove us on the gator over to a much better area. We are getting further away from the building.

Q. Further down south towards the ferry terminal and stuff?

A. Yes, closer there. There was like a park, a park like area. You could sit down and you know, benches over there. I met the Chief, Chief Villani was there, then I saw Captain D'Amato over there also. We

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were talking and I says can't anybody just ask, somebody just tell me what do I do to find out if he's okay. He says he is fine, Chief McCracken told me he is fine. I said Chief Villani what do I do. What do I do to find out. I have no phone. My phone is not working. I don't know what's going on. He just took Captain D'Amato's radio from me at that point and never said anything to me.

Then they took me over to the ferry terminal where the command post was set up and I sat there for a while. I went and cleaned up in the bathroom, but I went back out. I went back looking.

Q. Back north up to go looking for him again?

A. To the same spot. But I went in and out. I went in and out of the streets looking and nothing. I did that maybe about three times from the command post and back there. After that I stayed there, because after receiving like numerous pages from Division 5, I didn't answer it, I think it was Alice, just wanting to know hey, are you okay. So I didn't bother.

I settled down. I calmed down a bit and that's when I made the phone call to Division 5 and Alice told me that Chief Grant was admitted at the hospital and he is okay and he just wanted to know if

M. McMILLAN

you were okay. So now they heard from me, everybody was fine.

After that, I said to her, just tell Chief Grant I'm going to bring the car. I left a whole lot out. I'm going ahead of myself.

Q. That's okay.

A. I said tell Chief Grant stay there. I'm coming. That's all I said and I hung up. I had at some point when I walked back, one of those times I walked back to the area. I moved the car, it was filled with debris, you couldn't see anything and the cars were coming back and forth just covering you in more debris.

I turned the car around, I put it in a different direction. At least I said if you see the car in a different direction you will know that I'm alive, because I'm the only one with the other key. So I cleaned the car out somewhat, and I drove over to Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Bridge? Yes, the Brooklyn Bridge, and I made it over and I went to Lutheran Hospital and I saw Chief Grant. I left the scene entirely.

Q. What hospital was that?

A. Lutheran Hospital. That was it. When that

M. McMILLAN

debris fell and I first ran into that building, I didn't think that I would make it out alive. I never thought I would see the next day. I practically gave up hope, thinking that this is it, this is my destiny. Here I am. Take it. I'm giving it up all right now.

That was my story. I thank god I'm here right now.

Q. Another quite interesting story. There has been a whole lot of them. There really have been, yes. Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to put into this?

A. Not really.

Q. Okay.

A. I never even seen Mala or Frank to see how they are doing. I don't know even know if they are okay, but we didn't have any fatalities or anything.

Q. Right. As far as I know I have been -- as far as I know I believe both of them are okay.

A. Oh, you know.

Q. Well, Frank I know, I'm pretty sure he is okay?

A. And Katherine, she is home recuperating.

MR. TAMBASCO: Right, so, but, yes, well, okay, Mary, thank you for the interview. This

M. McMILLAN

interview is concluding at 1305 hours.

File No. 9110082

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER CACHIA

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



P. CACHIA

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 15, 2001. The time now is 655 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck with the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command area of the New York City Fire Department.

A. My name is Peter Cachia. I'm an EMT with the New York City Fire Department, assigned to Battalion 4.

Q. Also present today is --

A. Christopher Eccleston of the New York Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Mr. Cachia, we would like you to relay your experience on the events of September 11, 2001.

A. On September 11, 2001, I was assigned to my Battalion in a light duty status, secondary to an injury back in the past. At approximately, let's see, right before the first plane hit the first tower, myself and the two Lieutenants on duty were at the desk and we heard the radio transmission that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Centers.

I remember the conditions boss leaving to go to the scene, and the desk Lieutenant on duty was

P. CACHIA

basically getting things in order. People were coming in. He was assigning them ambulances to go to the scene. After a few minutes of that, the Lieutenant had left and he had given me the keys to the station and said I was to -- anybody who came into the station, I was to get them to the scene, give them a radio and an ambulance and have them go to the scene.

About 9, 5 after 9 or 10 after 9, Lieutenant Amy Monroe came to the station and asked me if I could drive her to the scene. I advised her that I was on light duty. She said-- she asked me if I could drive and I said yes I can, as long as I didn't have to do any heavy lifting. She said okay.

We then proceeded to the scene, parked the ambulance on Cortlandt Street and then we proceeded to the first triage center, which was on Church Street, basically in front of the Trade Center complex.

Q. I'm going to ask you to mark on the map with the number 1 where you parked your vehicle. Do you know the vehicle number?

A. 13.

Q. Vehicle 13?

A. Yes. At that time when we proceeded to the triage center, at this time both towers had been

P. CACHIA

struck. We met up with the triage Lieutenants there. I think Lieutenant Medjuck was on scene. Lieutenant D'Avila, Lieutenant Melaragno were all on scene. We started treating the patients as they came out. I saw a few of my partners that I worked with in their units there. They were treating patients in their ambulances.

We were there maybe for about 25 minutes or so and that triage center had been getting a little crowded, so Lieutenant Monroe had asked me if there was another triage center. I said I think there was one on Liberty Street, so she had asked me to go to that triage center and to see if they were taking, you know, patients over there or if they needed help or anything.

So I left her and I went to -- I was on the way to the second triage center when the first tower started coming down, which would be, I guess the south tower was coming down. When that started coming down, I basically turned around and like everyone else, I started running up the block, but due to my injury --

Q. Which way were you running, do you know?

A. I was running -- I guess this is, let me just get my bearing, this would be northeast.

P. CACHIA

Q. On Liberty?

A. Up Liberty. I was very close. I was like a little too close to the tower when it started coming down, because when I started running, I knew I was too close and I really didn't think I was going to get out of there. So about halfway up Liberty Street I saw a truck, I guess an SUV. It wasn't a police or a fire vehicle. It was just a car that was parked there. I went under the truck while the tower came down and the ground was shaking and the truck was shaking and I thought that was it for me. I thought I was done.

I stayed under there until I guess everything was over. I remember opening my eyes and looking out and it was just pitch black. I guess after a few minutes after it cleared up, after I opened my eyes, I looked out and it was bright out again. I got from under the truck and I went back up Liberty, which was now just a pile of rubble and I went to go back to the triage center where I was, where we started out and everybody had gone from there.

So I just continued going up Church Street and when I got to Church and Fulton Street, I met up with Lieutenant D'Avila again and he told -- said let's get out of here, the second one might be coming down.

P. CACHIA

So then we went back up Fulton Street and the second tower had come down, but we were far enough away from it, but again, like everybody else, we just ran.

After that, I remembered running down Fulton Street and going into a store, seeing the cloud of dust going by from the second tower and then hearing it coming down.

Q. At that time, were you with any other EMS personnel or fire personnel?

A. No, Lieutenant D'Avila had gone one way and I went the other way. When I came out, I started going back to the scene, but now my back was just bothering me a lot. I turned around and I was walking towards Downtown Beekman Hospital. I walked towards there. As I was walking towards there two police officers had saw me and they saw that I was in pain and I could hardly walk and they helped me down to Beekman Hospital.

I got to Beekman Hospital and the doctors, you know, they rinsed me off, because I was just covered in that dust. They asked me what the problem was. I said, you know, I have 3 herniated disks in my back. I'm fine. I just need to rest, just take care of everybody, because they were -- I mean -- they were overrun with patients.

P. CACHIA

I said just take care of everybody else. I'm fine. I just got to rest a little bit. So I sat down for a few minutes. I remember being in the hospital. I remember hearing somebody saying that they crashed a plane into the Pentagon also, so it was like just unbelievable what was going on. I stayed in the hospital for a little while.

Then I walked back down towards South Street and as I was walking down South Street, I was going past - I forgot the name -- there is like an apartment complex right across from Beekman Hospital and that was also being set up as a triage center. As I walked past there, I saw Lieutenant D'Avila. He said come inside, just rest for a little while. So I went in there and sat down for a few minutes. I stayed there for a few minutes and as I left, I walked out and I walked back down to South Street and at that time I flagged down a police car. He had taken me back to the station, because I was just in too much pain where I couldn't do anything after that.

So I came back to the station. I just basically stayed here for a little while. At the end of my shift at 3:00, the Lieutenant just said for me just to go home. I went home. I mean I didn't want

P. CACHIA

to, but I was basically useless, because I couldn't -- my back was just in severe pain. I really wasn't any good to anybody. There wasn't anything to do here. We didn't have any phones or anything to answer, no computer to go on.

So that's about it. That's basically the day I don't think any of us will forget. Something that I never thought I would see in my life. Just lucky to be alive I guess. I guess it just wasn't my time.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this about the events that happened prior to 12 noon?

A. No, I mean it's -- I don't know. It's just as a service, as an EMS service, I think we were very lucky. From the units from this Battalion being the first ones down there and us not losing anybody is a miracle.

Q. At any time, did you go into either one of the towers?

A. No. I mean I didn't want to, I really didn't. I mean I don't think anybody thought they would come down. I don't know, just I remember getting there and just looking up and just seeing these two gaping holes in the side of these buildings. It was

P. CACHIA

just like watching a movie. I remember after the first one got hit, we all went out the door out here.

When it came over a plane crashed into the Trade Center, okay, a little Cessna. We didn't know until we went out and we looked and we saw and we all said this wasn't a Cessna. I remember coming back here. At that time the TV still worked. We had the TV on channel 4 news. We were watching it. I remember watching the news and looking and seeing the second plane going into it.

I said oh, my god. Is that the first plane or is that the second plane. I saw it was the second plane and then I remembered hearing Lieutenant D'Avila coming over the radio and saying Central be advised, a second plane just went into the second tower. We ran out and we saw the second plane.

It was like watching a movie. It really was. Something that you never thought you would see and something that you never comprehend. It's just a day, like I said, nobody will ever forget.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Thank you for your time and your thoughts. This interview is concluded at 706 hours.



File No. 9110083

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT THOMAS J. BENDICK

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

T.J. BENDICK

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 15, 2001. The time is 745 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Thomas J. Bendick. Emergency medical technician, assigned to Division 1.

Q. Also present?

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Thomas, can you tell us about the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Approximately I guess sometime around 9:45 or earlier, I arrived at work. I met up with one of the guys from the Division, Duane Walker, and myself and him responded to the World Trade Center incident, and parked our vehicle, which was an empty ambulance full of supplies, someplace approximately Fulton and Trinity, I guess near St. Pauls cemetery, where Lieutenant Melarango was on scene triaging patients. Exited the vehicle. We left our vehicle at that

T. J. BENDICK

location.

Q. Can you mark on the map with a number 1 where you parked your vehicle?

A. Right about there, I guess.

Q. Also, would you happen to know what vehicle number it was?

A. I honestly do not. 300 series, one of the newer ambulances. I wasn't driving. I was the passenger. That vehicle was parked there and left there with supplies in the back. It wasn't being used for transporting patients. It was full of backboards. As I exited the vehicle, I spoke to the guys with Duane and said I was going to go to the command post to meet up with the Chiefs, being that I'm a Chief's aide.

Left the vehicle. I guess within a minute on scene, I left that location, took my bag of supplies that I had with me, some extra batteries and supplies, being that I figured we would be there for a long time, proceeded down Vesey Street towards the West Side Highway. Got to 7 World Trade Center.

I saw another EMS triage location with Captain Nahmod and Chief Peruggia were treating patients and I guess a little bit after I got past that

T. J. BENDICK

point, there was a loud roar. This is probably I would say about 5 minutes after I got on the scene, maybe a little bit longer.

I figured another plane was coming. I stopped for a second, looked around and I didn't see anything and then I began to run towards the West Side Highway, where I saw MERV 1, figuring to get as far away from buildings, not knowing what was going on. I got to the corner of 140 West, where the New York Telephone Company building was, saw a little -- like a little indent into the building. It was a construction barrier or wall that was built.

I went behind the wall I guess with another Firefighter, Police Captain and a couple of civilians. We put our backs against the wall because of not knowing what the heck was going on. Then in a couple of seconds, the roar stopped and I guess like in a split second it was just pure black.

After it got dark, one gentleman said is everybody all right. I think everybody that was standing there was like yes, I'm fine. I think the same gentleman who was doing most of the talking, he asked a guy out loud who was talking to himself, he goes do we stay here or do we leave.

T. J. BENDICK

At the same time you hear everybody start coughing and choking on all the dirt and the fumes and the smoke, so immediately you knew there was no chance of staying there, so one guy is like well, we got to get out of here. Like I said, out loud everybody is basically thinking to themselves. One guy says, well, I think there is ambulances and fire trucks behind us going towards the highway. Then he said does anybody have a flashlight?

So I reached down in my belt and I actually had a small flashlight with me. I took my small flashlight out and turned that on and the guy that was talking, grabbed my hand immediately, because I guess he was standing right next to me and then we waved the flashlight around asking if there was anybody else near us. You could hear a couple of voices near us, but most of them said they couldn't see the flashlight, even though they sounded like they were about 2 feet from you.

So eventually, I think about 2 more people we were able to get and we all held hands. Then a couple of other people were able to work their way over and then grabbed on to us. So it was about I guess 5 or 6 of us, we all held hands and we used the one flashlight

T. J. BENDICK

and we started walking towards the West Side Highway.

Like I said, we had an idea which way to go. You could kind of hear the diesel engine from one of the fire trucks, so like I said, we were hoping that was the West Side Highway. Like I said, the visibility was, I guess with the flashlight, about a foot. Without the flashlight it was zero.

Meanwhile you couldn't breathe, so at that point I was using my turnout coat and my shirt, put that over my face, trying to filter the air out. It wasn't like it was smoke. It was just dirt. It was like breathing dirt. So trying to just keep the dirt out of your mouth so you can get some form of air.

I remember not being able to see. I remember walking, hitting the curb, going by the guy who was in front of me, who was holding my hand with the flashlight. He tripped off the sidewalk and I held him and he said, you know, we said everybody watch out. There is a sidewalk, so I remember stepping off the sidewalk. You couldn't see your feet. You could just feel it. I can remember stepping over several fire hoses. Once again you couldn't see them. You could just feel them.

We found the fire truck we heard. We walked

T. J. BENDICK

along the fire truck. We were holding the fire truck, feeling it. Got past the fire truck and there was more like open space, so we just kept walking up in the open space, heading north, trying to -- we couldn't run, you just had to go slow because you couldn't see.

I guess we got about -- I think about Murray Street, I would say. It would have had to been by the time we got to fresh air, because I remember the college. So we got someplace around the college where the fresh air started and I think in the middle of West and Murray, there was a Citywide ambulance parked with its passenger door open. I guess they had been and gone.

So I climbed in that ambulance, climbed in the back of their ambulance because it was a van. You can climb through. I got their saline out of the back, because my eyes and everything, my mouth were full of garbage. So I got out of the ambulance from the side door, and I washed my eyes out, washed my mouth out, trying to get as much of the dirt out of me. The other gentleman with us, once we got to free air, they all scattered and went to wherever they had to go.

After I washed my eyes out, I went back to I guess about the south point of the college on Murray.

T. J. BENDICK

There I met up with Captain Nahmod, who was at 7 World Trade Center. He got out. He was by himself and 2 FDNY EMS physicians came by. They had some of the dust masks, so one of them gave me a dust mask. I honestly don't know who they were. They were Fire Department members. So I got a dust mask, because it was still kind of dusty where we were standing.

At that point, they were trying to get an idea of what was going on, get a plan together. At that same point, I was looking around and I saw -- numerous civilians were asking are you all right, do you need anything. At that point, some place on the west side, on the West Side Highway, a cop had opened a fire hydrant and he had the hydrant going and everybody was like washing their face off, so then I went over there to wash off. I was letting the water go through my mouth and the cop is saying the water is dirty, what are you doing opening your mouth. I said at this point it doesn't really make a difference clearing what's in my mouth.

So I washed off again, because there was just so much stuff on you. Then I met up with Lieutenant Albuerm from Battalion 8, who now got on. I don't know where he came from, but he ended up on the same



T. J. BENDICK

point, right around the college. So myself, Joe Cahill, a bunch of us met up, so we all started talking to get an idea together of what we wanted to do.

Right about that point, we were looking southbound and we were all standing like in a group huddled. We were saying okay, if people come out, you know, I guess we will get them, put them to the side, and sometime around there you saw that the north tower collapsed. That I actually -- the south tower I never saw collapse, didn't know it collapsed. All I could see was a large cloud.

At that point I could actually visually see the top floors of the north tower starting to give way and that began to collapse. At that point we all began to run north.

Q. Where were you at this point?

A. We had to be right at the same area, about West and Murray, because this is the -- where is the College of Manhattan College?

Q. This is it, I believe. That's not it. It's further up.

A. So we were further up at that point.

Q. It's right past Chambers, so you must have been like right around here.

T. J. BENDICK

A. Okay. So we had to be around Chambers, because we were at the south side of Manhattan Community College when the second building collapsed. So we actually may have walked even further then, because I remember we got to about Manhattan Community College. The other thing I should note, the pedestrian bridge there, which I think is all in the same area, and that's where we met up with everybody.

At that point, we ran north alongside of the college, because I was on the sidewalk right next to the college, going north and between the college there is a walkway, actually a road that goes under the college, so we ran in underneath there, so the college building is against our backs and then when the debris came, it would go past us, not necessarily striking us. The only thing we worried about was anything coming down on top of us.

At the same point, a plain clothes, which I assume was a police officer, fired three rounds of his revolver into the door of the Manhattan Community College, the glass doors, which caused a panic. Everybody was screaming shots fired, get down.

I actually visually saw the guy fire the 3 shots. He wasn't in a uniform. He was in plain

T. J. BENDICK

clothes. I was actually screaming, no, calm down, he is shooting the door out because like I say, he just caused a huge panic, because now, obviously everybody knows it's a terrorist attack, and this guy is shooting his gun off. So he blew the doors out to the college, because they were glass doors. He climbed in, called people, try to get to safety.

At that point, I looked back, right before I made the turn, and it looked like most of the dust. It wasn't coming that far, so I wasn't too concerned about the actual building, so we stopped for a minute, relaxed, and walked back out on to the highway, and then said, okay, we need to set up another triage, figure something out. By the same people, Joe Cahill, Lieutenant Bearman and myself, some other people, I don't know who they were, all met up at the north corner of the college and we were trying to figure out how to get into the college to set up the triage and just get people off the street.

Joe Cahill made arrangements with some staff person at the college to get the gym open, which was on the second floor, but had an access stairwell from outside the building. So we went up into the gym, which they got open. We laid -- there's mats. We laid

T. J. BENDICK

down mats. Brought some supplies in from the ambulance that was sitting on the street.

Don't ask me the number, it was an ALS ambulance. We got into the back door. Took their supplies out. Put those inside. Figured we will take members, police or whoever was like, you know, couldn't move, but you know, wasn't in need to go to the hospital, we just let them sit in there and take a break.

After we got that set up, we figured we will shuffle people up, MERV 4 was parked in the street right outside the door, so they were taking anybody that was truly hurt. They were looking at -- there was numerous ambulances on the West Side Highway. Basically like I said, everybody was just trying to see what they could do.

At the same point, one of the Lieutenants said, I don't know his name, said get everybody to take their coats and their gear off, because we don't know what's -- if they are contaminated with anything, before they go into the building.

So at that point, I went over to one of the fire Chiefs on the West Side Highway, where there was a fire truck parked. There was no firemen except for two

T. J. BENDICK

injured firemen and this injured Chief, we were thinking of taking supplies off the truck, possibly hook up a hydrant to get decon going. The Chief said take whatever you want.

So it looked like a probationary firefighter who was off duty, because he was clean, he just like -- he had just shown up and a plainclothes cop and myself took a fire hose, hooked up to the fire hydrant right in front of the Community College, about a hundred feet from this intersection, and we put the hose to the corner, figuring as people come out at the intersection, we will wash them down, throw them in the gym, and let them get -- you know, take a break.

I don't know what time frame that was, or how long it took us to get all that accomplished, but it took a time. By that point, we set all that up, the gym was open, we had the whole plan, put everybody in the gym, wash them down, and if there was injured, the MERV was there.

So it seemed kind of organized, and it had an action plan, and sometime around there, we could hear on the Citywide radio that they were sending the rest of the units in to Chelsea Piers for north staging. I don't think they even knew we were there, because the

T. J. BENDICK

radio was just too tied up to even try to tell them where we were.

So we just figured, you know, we are together, we will stay together, the people we had, treat them, there was ambulances there. Just throw them in the ambulances and get them out. We need to get people out. I guess all the responding units were going to Chelsea Piers, but we figured it was too far away to try to bring patients, because, I mean, it's a drive. So we figured if anybody -- if we needed to go there, we could go there, but we figured we still needed to treat people where we were.

Sometime around the same point they ended up calling, the Lieutenants came out to everybody and said we are evacuating, drop whatever you got, grab our supplies. We are getting out, because the Stuyvesant school they were feared was going to explode and there were reports of gas leaks and additional devices.

So about the same point we dropped all of our equipment, some of the EMTs and Lieutenants took the supplies that we had in the building out, threw them in the back of some of the ambulances, and sometime around that point, we were just like, okay, let's just get out.

T. J. BENDICK

At that point I was tired and I was like okay, I'm getting out. Got in the back of one ambulance that had the windows blown out, but the crew was in the front, so they start driving, so they opened the back doors and we stood in the back and there was all the other people on the street. We piled them all in the back of the ambulance and we drove up to Chelsea Piers. I remember, I think it was Pelham Manor Fire Department we threw in the back. A couple of cops, a couple of EMTs, I think St. Claire's EMTs. We had about 20 people in the back I wouldn't doubt it. We just drove up to Chelsea Piers.

At that point, that's like, we just gave up on what we were doing and we just headed to Chelsea Piers and then, you know, everybody regrouped, found who they were working with. Looked like most of the guys who were by themselves, they lost their partners, teamed up with somebody else and about that point they were setting up the hospital at Chelsea Piers. Some of the guys that were by themselves, I noticed went over to the hospital and were working out of the field hospital, big help. But I didn't see any patients go up there, except for that one Firefighter. I sat there for the rest of the night.

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Then the Lieutenant said I'm going back to the station. You got a vehicle? I said okay, I'll come with you. It had to be sometime, I guess, around 6:00. Like I said, I can't tell you how long it took to accomplish the tasks. I didn't notice the watch. I was on the north side of the north tower at 6 World Trade Center when the south tower collapsed. Got out of that, grouped, the north tower collapsed, got out of that, went to the college, tried to set up and that's when they said they blew up the school and there might be additional explosions and they said evacuate the downtown area and then I went up to Chelsea Piers.

I don't think I missed any, but that's about it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this? Anything at all?

A. I don't think so. Obviously as you know, there was a lot going on. Lots of people moving around. Obviously there was numerous firefighters and everybody was coming south. We were all trying to find a safe distance to triage and do our work, but they didn't tell you what was safe at that point.

MR. ECCLESTON: Right. Okay. The time is 8 o'clock, this concludes our interview with Thomas



Bendick.

File No. 9110085

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JOSEPH CAHILL

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. CAHILL

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 15, 2001. The time is 1217 hours. I'm Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Okay. My name is Joseph Cahill. I'm a Paramedic. My office title is Citywide advance life support coordinator and I work in the office of EMS operations.

Q. Also present is?

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Joe, can you tell me about the events of September 11, 2001?

A. Okay. Well, I was running late. So I was on an odd train, which means that when things started, I was actually in the train in New Jersey. I heard one of the other passengers yell out holy fuck. And I looked out the window. One of the twin towers was visibly on fire. You could see the red of the smoke or

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the red through the smoke from the side of the building.

We got to Hoboken station. Naturally the PATH train to World Trade Center was closed. World Trade Center is the only stop on that -- New York stop on that train. So I took the 33 Street train to Christopher Street with the intention of walking into the scene, which is essentially what I did. I walked in about halfway down. A postal employee gave me a ride in his postal truck. He gave me a ride to, I guess it must be Vesey Street.

He dropped me off, drove me down whatever street this is. I don't know what that is.

Q. I think that's --

A. But I remember coming down through here and I don't know, maybe he drove me down --

Q. West Street?

A. Yes, I think he might have. Because I remember coming straight down. I don't remember making this zigzag, coming straight -- yes, and ending up here. He let me out on the zebra stripes over here. My original thought was to go to OEM, because I routinely work OEM for the Chief during other emergencies, but I figured I would find out what was

J. CAHILL

going on a little more first.

Let's see. At that point I remember seeing -- it was a proprietary ambulance. I don't believe it was part of the 911 contract there. Asked them if they knew where the command center was. They kind of shrugged, threw some equipment over their shoulders and we both walked up to Church Street, where there seemed to be a couple of other units there.

I spoke to them briefly. I think there was an officer there but I don't remember who. That looked like it was under control. So I walked back down Vesey. I remember seeing Frank Larkin from the Secret Service run by at a dead run. That just stuck in my head.

I got all the way down to Vesey and West Side Drive and I ran into Chief Villani. Talked to him briefly. I looked around, down here, adjacent to the Trade Center, there seemed to be a lot of vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks, up the West Side Highway. There was also a lot of vehicles with more coming in.

I told Chief Villani listen, it doesn't look like there is anyone staging. I will walk up there and start organizing that, but I don't have a radio because I came in on foot. He said okay. I don't remember if

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it was then or when I got up here further that I ran into Pinky. I don't know Pinky's last, real name. He is a Lieutenant at Bellevue. A little Spanish guy. I don't know his last name. I think it might have been at this point, because I couldn't have gotten much past Barclay when the first building collapsed.

From where I was standing, wherever that was, it was definitely south across here somewhere. There is a pedestrian walk, but it was definitely right below this pedestrian walkway. From where I stood, Chief Villani had said -- he pointed out one of these buildings. I can't, without being there and looking at it, I'm not sure which one of these it is around the Winter Garden.

But he said the command post is over there. If you need anything come over here. I said you know, I told him about the radio thing. I got about here, which is where we started to put staging together, when one of the towers collapsed and it looked for all the world like it collapsed right on where he indicated the command center to be.

I don't remember who told me before the collapse, but it might have been Chief Villani. It might have been somebody else, told me that Chief

J. CAHILL

Goldfarb was in the command post. At that point truthfully, Pinky and I, because sometime shortly after that we hooked up, or shortly before that. At that point I thought Pinky was probably the highest ranking guy still alive on the scene.

We proceeded up above the walkway, started to organize a staging area there the second time and then the second building collapsed, drove us from that position up further. Is this College of Insurance? Do you know which one of these is Stuyvesant?

Q. Yes, it's up here.

A. So when we were driven out the second time -- so maybe there is another walkway up here.

Q. Yes, there is --

A. Then it's not this walkway. It's this walkway.

Q. Pedestrian walkway? Where you were talking about when the first building came down you were by the pedestrian walkway.

A. I was between these two walkways.

Q. Just south of Chambers?

A. Yes, I think so. Chambers, Warren, something like that.

Q. This map could have been better if it was

J. CAHILL

extended more.

A. When we got driven out by the second collapse, we went up and I remember we started setting up right next to Stuyvesant High School. Then we got the word that there was a gas leak in there and that we had to evacuate that area. We were driven back further up. But that was later on.

I remember talking to an ass load of Hatzolah guys. They must have had 6 units on the scene. There was a bunch of our units. Before the first collapse, yes, I must have been up here. Because before the first collapse I had made it just about to where the vehicles started, where we were starting to organize staging. I remember seeing George Burbano from Battalion 22.

Q. 22?

A. He was off duty, so I gave him my work sweat shirt, so he had something so the cops wouldn't try to eject him from the scene. I remember he was helping me move vehicles. I remember running from both collapses with him, both of the tower collapses. Then I saw -- I don't remember whose shield numbers these are. I remember I saw Rich, not Rich, Mitch Berkowitz, who was also off duty. I don't know if he is light duty or off



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duty. I remember all he was wearing was his medic blue shirt, dark blue shirt and a pair of jeans, which might have mean that's what he grabbed out of the car when he jumped out on his way to the station or might have meant he was doing retrieval while his wrist healed up. I don't know.

I remember collecting these two shield numbers for some reason, of people that were there.

Q. That would be 1172?

A. 74.

Q. 74, sorry, 1174 and 3871?

A. 3871. I had given these shield numbers to one of the new Captains, Debbie Monte, a week or so afterward, because she was riding the desk here that was keeping track of the list.

So anyway, once we got beaten out of the position for a third time, we got from the gas leak, actually before that. When we were beaten out by the second collapse, I went into the Borough of Manhattan Community College, looked for a phone. I finally found one in the security office. I called my office downstairs. I asked them to -- I asked Mery Bento, who is one of the secretaries down there, to page out the Division ALS coordinators. The first one she could get

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a hold of was to take a vehicle, drive to the pharmacy, find a pharmacist, get 10 cases of everything, get 20 cases of asthma meds and -- I think I ended up with 20 cases of everything, 50 cases of asthma meds and eye drops, because it looked like we were going to be dug in for a long time.

There must have been a significant period of time between the second tower collapse and when we got beat out of the position by the gas leak. I don't think the gas leak is on there. We got beat out of position by the gas leak, because we had started to set up a walking wounded treatment, a holding area in the gym of Borough of Manhattan Community College. The reason I say that we must have -- must have been some amount of time, we started seeing patients in that time period.

There was -- I don't know who owns it -- there was some kind of blood mobile. No, you know what it was, it was one of those blood pressure screening vans, but it was a respectable size RV. We set that up as a MERV at one point. They had a PAA. We put -- I think we used a crew from Hatzolah and Tommy Carlstrom, I think we put in there, to kind of interface everything and make sure everything stayed on

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an even keel.

Hatzolah had a huge amount of equipment there, because they were in their private vehicles. So we grabbed a couple of their guys and a full set of equipment and threw it in there. I don't think we ever got to use it though. We started seeing a lot of patients with crap in their eyes, a lot of patients with inhaled stuff and that's the only reason I knew we needed to get those -- bulk up on those specific two things of medication.

I also called Jimmy Geraci, who apparently had seen either the real life version or on TV on radio, was starting to crank up his guys, get his disaster trucks on the road. I gave him a heads up that what we are going to be needing a lot of is eye wash, eye flush, stuff like that. I don't know whatever happened to those trucks because right after I had that conversation with him, we got moved out because of the gas leak. My understanding is they finally got to the scene at some other point. Where we were north of the job, it never came there. I understand they got to the south part somehow.

After the gas leak we went further north. I don't remember how much further north. I could point

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the building out on the scene. On the scene, if you are looking northward, Borough of Manhattan Community College is a brick building on the right-hand side. It has got a little underpass to let one of the roads through. That line of route continues up another block or a building or two without appreciably getting higher.

The next really tall building is where we tried to reform again. It's got something to do with the phone company. It's an AT&T office building, something like that. I don't remember. It would be relatively easy to point out on the scene. We stopped there, started getting under control again and somewhere in that point, I started to walk down and chase stragglers, and head personnel up. I ran into Chief Hirth, Lieutenant Cacciola, Grace.

Q. Grace?

A. And Mark Stone, who looked pretty worse for wear. Essentially they told me at that point that we were going to start rallying up at 23 Street at the piers. We were going to start putting together a thing up there. I said okay. I'm going to come down a little bit and start chasing stragglers up so that they aren't wandering around down here with no direction.

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At that point I saw Jimmy Schrang. I started talking to him. My absolute favorite story of this whole thing. Jimmy Schrang goes, you know, my friends from Bosnia called me today to see if I was okay.

Anyway we took one of these cross streets. It's probably like Warren or Murray, because we didn't have to cut through any of these buildings. We didn't have to zig around any of these buildings. We came over here. Every once in a while we would run into somebody. We would send them up to Chelsea Piers.

Then we got -- I kind of imagine it was over here somewhere. No, because we couldn't see City Hall, so it must have been on Church Street somewhere. It's Church or whatever there, West Street. We started working our way down. Somewhere in here Jimmy saw a guy over here. I saw a guy over here in uniform. He said I will go back to talk to him, I will go over and talk to him. I will meet you back here in a minute.

I went over here to talk to him and found that "him" was the furthest outlier of a big treatment sector that was here. I don't remember if it was here. I don't think it was up here. I don't remember seeing St. Paul's. I don't know how -- maybe it was further up this way. I do remember that this side of

J. CAHILL

the block had a small --

Q. This side of Church?

A. Yes, the west side of Church had a -- some kind of courtyard, like a building courtyard that was securely fenced off, because I remember seeing cops climbing over the fence, but it had trees, little trees. Not great big jongando trees, but little trees.

Anyway, I ran into a treatment sector here. Lieutenant Platt was in charge, Ed Platt. He and I talked for a little while. There was a lot of units there. There was maybe 4 or 5 FDNY units. There was two units from Jersey City, at least. There was a couple of commercial ambulances there. There were a couple of voluntary ambulances there. What was also there was a suspicious package on one of these side streets.

So I told him that, you know, the direction that we had gotten was to fall back to 23 Street and Chelsea Piers, at which point he said well, who gave you that direction. The truth of the matter is that Chief Hirth didn't say Joe, go get everybody and make everybody fall back. So I really didn't have a good answer for him. So he had a radio, so he was able to

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actually reach Chief Peruggia, who at least temporarily told to us hold position there.

We organized these guys. I started working essentially as a staging officer. I walked down the row of ambulances that were probably scattered around over here, who's on your crew, what's your unit, where do you work from. What vehicle you got. Be ready to move in 10 minutes because we may end up bugging out. A short while later we were given the order to fall back, but not to Chelsea Piers, to Greenwich and something. Greenwich and something. No, it was -- I never got south of the Battery Tunnel over the entrance. That was only way way later. That was like 6:00 the next morning. It was Greenwich and something. I don't know. Oh, you know what, it was right in front of the Travelers Insurance building because we used the umbrella as a marker. This two story umbrella logo thing.

So at some point in my walking down there and starting to do the staging and writing down the units, a fellow walks up named Harold Watkins, and says yo. He is in a polo shirt, one of our uniform polo shirts and uniform pants and shoes and looks well, just kind of bewildered, but looks like he is in uniform and

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ready to go. I said hey, how you doing. Who are you. He said oh, my name is Harold Watkins, I'm a fire cadet and I work at the Fire Museum on my off -- as well.

I saw this all going on so I thought I would come and lend a hand. So Harold and I went around and did all this interviewing. When the order came to move, actually John Clair came through there as well while we were there. But I don't know. Time really didn't have that much relevance to me. There were no patients under my care so there was no time vitals, none of that stuff. We were just there for the duration of the job. So time really didn't mean much to me.

At some point we started to bug out. Some of the vehicles had trouble. One of them had burst a radiator hose or had a leaky radiator hose, so we started to organize getting a couple of vehicles jump started. John Clair had Joe Fell from the State with him.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. Yes, just as I remember stuff. We pulled out of there. We had to jump start two or three vehicles. One vehicle had, like I said, a leaking hose so we put them further up in the line and said, you know, if you



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can't make it any further, pull on to the sidewalk out of the way. We told all the vehicles behind them if you see them pull out on the sidewalk out of the way, you need to stop and pick them up, you know.

The reason we were given for why we were moving was that 7 World Trade Center was going to collapse or was at risk of collapsing. So we must have been somewhere in this area where we would have had a problem with that. But I honestly don't remember. It all looks -- I'm fairly familiar with this, actually this, from West Side Highway east almost to the river or certainly past City Hall from Liberty or not even -- from the Battery Tunnel opening north to Vesey, I'm fairly familiar with because I have travelled through there commuting a lot.

I drove through there the day after, the morning of the 12th and I didn't recognize most of the places I was. It all looked very different. It all looked like those videos you see of Pongo Pongo, a little island in the South Pacific has had a volcanic eruption and all the ash is falling out of the air. It was just -- I don't know exactly where we were.

We must have been up in this area somewhere. I know there was a physician's group -- would have been

J. CAHILL

on the north, or the south of one of these streets.

Q. Like Warren, Murray?

A. Something like that. We had to have been in that range because --

Q. On this street?

A. Yes, because they were worried about us.

They wanted us to move the treatment sector because of 7 World Trade Center was imminently to collapse, which, of course, it did. In fact it did while we were moving.

So this guy Harold Watkins and I, not having a vehicle, everybody else was moving out, I told Ed, you know what, we will start walking back up and we will meet you there. There was a volunteer unit and I don't remember from where, that was parked on the -- would have been the west part of the intersection. It was an odd shaped intersection too, in that it was almost like-- it was a triangular intersection where there was two roads coming north-south that came together, joined -- I wonder if we weren't here. I don't think so. We might have been here up by like West Broadway, because -- yes, you know what, I think we were on Broadway. We would have been right in here between Broadway and West, like around Murray or Park.

J. CAHILL

The police had one of these eastern cross streets blocked off, like I said, with the suspicious package, which looked like a suitcase or an old fashioned briefcase.

So Watkins and I walked back up and met the rest of the group at Greenwich, at the Travelers building. Got to chasing a few stragglers up. The rest of the group set up there. I don't know what happened to Platt. I didn't see him again. I don't remember where he ended up. I did see when I got to the Travelers building, which maybe that wasn't where we were originally headed. Maybe that isn't Greenwich and something. Maybe they ended up setting up another treatment sector somewhere else.

When we got to the Travelers building, there was a huge amount of units. There must have been 20, 25 units there. But there was an enormous amount of people. There was a queue of like 3,000 people waiting to help. There was some enormous firefighter. I don't know if he was our Firefighter or from somewhere else. The bunker gear, he didn't have the jacket so you couldn't really tell, but his bunker gear didn't look like ours. I don't remember why. It was the wrong color or the wrong something. His job was essentially

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to organize the volunteers.

What he did was he organized them. They were moved over here. They had a little briefing. Then they moved them over here. Then they had another little briefing. Then they moved them over here. They essentially just paraded them around this section, because there wasn't anything for them to do, because they couldn't send them into the unsafe zone, but there was huge amounts of people.

So again, I remember seeing there, I remember seeing Tommy from Bellevue. What the hell was his name. Used to be Chief Pascale's aide when I was their Division coordinator. I will think of it. I can picture him. Eppinger, was there. There were at least two other Lieutenants there. So I slipped into the familiar -- now familiar role of staging officer and Harold Watkins and I walked around to all the units, who are you? Where are you from? What are your shield numbers? You know. All right, take a roll of 2 inch tape. What's your normal 911 designation, good. Put that on the windshield. Don't have one? Okay, you are now Jersey City one. You are Jersey City two. We labeled all the windshields with who they were. We stayed there for a while. Again I don't really know,

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time was really kind of meaningless. I know we had at least one command car there. One of the supervisors had a car, because we were storing some stuff in it. Now my briefcase ended up in Pinky's car real early on.

So we didn't see a whole lot of patients there. I don't think we saw any patients there. Sometime during the day a guy in what looked like -- he was in battle dress fatigues, he looked like he was from the National Guard, but I don't know. David something. Came up, said hey, you know, we got a hospital over in the Borough of Manhattan Community College and we got no transport resources. So the supervisors and I and him talked about that for a minute.

I got the assignment to walk down there with him, see what was going on down there, because as far as we knew at that point, at least in that location, by Travelers, we had abandoned the location in BMCC. Went back there and there was in fact a really big operation cranking up there, between Port Authority and I don't even know where they were from.

An emergency room physician had brought like a bunch of his staff and the Red Cross was helping out

J. CAHILL

and they were unloading truck loads of shit into this place. Stretchers, you know, little folding stretchers the Red Cross had, blankets, medicines, not a lot of medicines, like a lot of eye wash and aspirin and stuff like that. The Port Authority occupied another piece of it and they were bringing in all kinds of stuff. Brought cases of rubber boots, work gloves, flashlights, all kinds of stuff like that.

What essentially -- I came in agreement with the doctor that was running there is that, you know what, as long as the Port Authority will let us park, because they were controlling that block. As long as they will let us park there, we will keep an ALS and a BLS there. You use them? Send somebody up to us. Let us know where they are going and we will send you another bus.

That's where we kept it. We had a lot of problems with parking and stuff, moving around. That's where we kept it. I don't think they transported maybe a handful of patients. They saw a huge amount of patients, flushed their eyes and stuff. I know a bunch of the Port Authority guys went out to the pharmacies and brought stuff back.

After that, a couple of different times, I

J. CAHILL

went back and forth between those two locations, Travelers and BMCC, but I don't think they really saw a whole lot of patients. They ended up setting up food there, so they probably saw a whole lot of EMS people. What?

Sometime later on, I don't even remember how much later, I walked down to Chambers, which is what, this one, to the command post at Chambers and west side, and I saw Chief McCracken, talked to some of the other people there. Saw Lieutenant Cronin, and saw John Clair and was given the direction to start organizing, breaking down the BMCC hospital, because no one was aware that BMCC was there. They had already set up another hospital in Stuyvesant, which they are literally 3 blocks apart.

So I went back, talked to the doc, I said listen, you know, there is another hospital right down the block. They are going to catch all the patients because they are closer to the scene. What we would like to do is split up your materials and your personnel, send some up it up to the pier and some of it down to this other hospital. It's a more effective way of doing it.

He was very amenable to that. What that

J. CAHILL

ended up meaning is we split up his personnel from the equipment, took all the equipment that they didn't want to -- stuff they wanted to take, I mean, obviously was theirs. But then I think they only took the expensive equipment that they had personally brought.

We moved everything else down to Stuyvesant, which we used I guess a couple of busses from -- I want to say Metro Care, but I'm not sure if that's right. It was definitely one of the big commercials. They had 25 units lined up on the West Side Highway at that time. Like 18 of them ALS. Some of them from as far away as Connecticut. We used 2 or 3 of them, and there was a van there, a regular passenger van from the academy with a driver. I don't know that guy's name, but we used those three vehicles to move the stuff down into Stuyvesant. Put stuff in Stuyvesant.

At sometime during this, the Division 6 ALS coordinator, Al Suriel, arrived with a truck full of pharmaceuticals from our pharmacy. Had to be early on, because I remember bringing some of them up to Borough of Manhattan Community College and trading them for stuff we need. Truthfully, my whole day from that point on essentially doing what I do best, take a little stuff from over here, give it to this guy over



J. CAHILL

here. Oh, what, you have extra, good, take that from over here, bring that over there. Take some stuff extra from over here, bring it back to the first place.

Q. Bargaining?

A. Yes, and just, unfortunately, the whole thing -- well, what we obviously didn't know at the time, but unfortunately the whole thing was, you know, when you work the marathon in one of the tents, what happens is that like about two and a half hours in, everybody starts getting really antsy and if you don't stay on top of controlling the tent, what you end up with is 400 sets of IV fluids set up around the tent and that's exactly what was going on.

People were starting to get antsy to see patients. There was no one to see. I think a lot of movement of equipment was probably unnecessary, but kept people out of trouble too, which is okay. They did see -- I know Stuyvesant and BMCC saw a large amount of crap in the eyes, crap in the lungs. Got a boo-boo. Doesn't need a stitch, no, good, I'm back to work kind of thing.

So that's pretty much what I did the rest of the night. Al Suriel had a MUP student with him, because he was at refresher when he got paged. Her

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first name was Ronnie, I don't know what her last name is.

Q. Were they there prior to the collapse or after the collapse?

A. Probably not, probably not.

Q. We are mainly interested in people that were there prior.

A. Then we are done. I'm already into the evening at this point.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?  
Comments, feelings.

A. No, I think that probably the biggest impression I got out of this whole thing was this is probably as close to being in an infantry unit that gets overrun. We are scattered everywhere. Nobody knew where anybody was. Nobody knew who was in charge. It really felt for a moment that I was in *Apocalypse Now*, where Martin Sheen goes, where is your CO? Ain't that you? No. Uh-oh.

Let's pause for a second.

MR. ECCLESTON: Pausing the tape at 12:50.

(Pause)

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being restarted again at 1:10.

J. CAHILL

Q. Can you please continue with the events.

A. Yes, I mean I think where we left off was essentially recounting what happened the rest of my night, which was at different points shortages would show up in the Stuyvesant hospital. They need more fluid, I would find fluid for them. They need more eye drops, I would find eye drops for them. I remember we moved the multi-lator and the big M tank from the van at the bureau of training center, brought it inside, set it up, treat asthma. We made a little asthma booth out.

After that, there was a whole bunch of false starts where BOT were going to take people back and eventually Al Suriel and Ronnie went back with them to BOT because they were both in refresher and MUP class respectively.

I took over control of the pharmacy truck. I went to the command center and essentially stood by there for direction, because -- I hung out in the MERV for a while. All this stuff, it was already dark by this time. It was already early the next morning.

Then at the end of the day I walked back up to Christopher Street and another postal employee gave me a lift.

J. CAHILL

Q. Back to the train?

A. Back to the train. I took the train home.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this in regard to the events that happened prior to 12 noon?

A. You know what, I have been over it because I'm sure everybody else has as well. I have been over it in my head a great deal since then. I can't think of anything we could have significantly done better, but truthfully, the section I was in up on West Side Drive certainly north of Chambers for most of the day was not where the action was. It really wasn't where, you know, it wasn't where command post got collapsed on or treatment sectors got collapsed on. It certainly wasn't where I expect any of the missing, our missing, EMS missing people, would be from.

So I don't know.

MR. ECCLESTON: Okay. Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 113 hours.

File No. 9110086

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT BRUCE MEDJUCK

Interview Date: October 15, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The time is now 1123 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. Today I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title, your assigned command area of the Fire Department.

LIEUTENANT MEDJUCK: Bruce Medjuck, Lieutenant, assigned to EMS operations.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present at the interview today is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade disaster task force.

Q. Lieutenant Medjuck, we're going to ask you if you could please give us a synopsis of the events that happened September 11th, 2001, in regards to yourself.

A. Okay. Begin?

Q. Yes.

A. I don't know. Tuesday morning I was up -- actually I had done my little tasks in the office, some small tasks. Then I had come

upstairs to the office of medical affairs, and I was talking to Paramedic Delgado when we received a phone call from a representative of the New York State Department of Health. Mr. Farrell called in and asked us what was going on at the World Trade Center. We were completely unaware of what was going on. It had to be about 8:30, quarter to 9. We were not sure what time it was.

So we walked over to Laurie Santo, who was sitting at a computer that had CAD and we looked it up, the call, and she said that a plane had just hit the World Trade Center.

So at that point Dr. Cherson walked over and told Manny, "Let's go." The pagers started going off, that the plane had just hit, you know, the group pager.

So I actually ran downstairs to the office. By the time I ran back to operations, Lieutenant Mann and Lieutenant Nevins were getting radios from Lieutenant Frick and they were running out of the building.

So Captain Olszewski and I -- I grabbed a set of radios and all of my equipment. We went downstairs to Captain Olszewski's car, which was

parked in the outdoor parking lot. We got into one of the Chevy Lumina's. I'm not sure of the number.

I had called the RCC supervisor, which was Lieutenant Vitale at the time, and asked her to log us on, responding into the incident. We actually had to respond there down Flatbush Avenue without my lights and sirens trying to get through traffic.

Janice was driving, and we got into the -- they let us onto the Brooklyn Bridge. There was nothing on the Brooklyn Bridge. There were just emergency vehicles, all unmarked emergency vehicles responding in front of us.

I would note as we were coming out of the girder part of the Brooklyn Bridge just as you could see it clearing. We saw when we first started to go over the Brooklyn Bridge, the building smoking, tower one smoking, heavy black smoke coming out. Just as we came out of the bridge, we could see again the towers also with the plane come and slam into tower two.

There was like a little bit of delay, and then all of a sudden this fire ball just shot



out of the opposite side of the tower. When we saw -- I said to Janice: Did you see that, did you see that? She said no, I had my hands on the steering wheel; I'm watching the road.

So we came off of the bridge, and we actually went straight onto Chambers Street, where we came out. You know how the bridge lets you off by Chambers Street. We were trying to cut through all this traffic on Chambers Street in a car without any lights or sirens. Janice is driving as best as she could.

We cut across to West Street, and on West Street we cut left and went over to Vesey. By that time there were emergency vehicles all over the place. I told Janice just park the car on the corner of West and Vesey, which I marked on the map with a 1 next to it. We parked actually on the southwest corner.

We got out, and just as we got out of the car we had noticed -- we went right up to Chief Gombo who was there already. He was with Ross Terranova. Ross was operating the radio. Lieutenant Davila was just coming up to talk to Chief Gombo, along with Captain Pinkus.

Who else? I think that was really it for supervisors. I noticed out of the corner of my eye Chief Ganci's driver/aide Steve Mosiello. He was there.

Chief Gombo told myself and Janice -- he said something and then Rene Davila disappeared. Chief Gombo told myself and Janice to go over to the other side of the building on Church Street and set up a triage area, which was at the corner of Church and Fulton on the southeast corner, which I marked by a number 2. We were right in front of the Millennium Hotel.

Then Lieutenant Davila came over there, and we were pretty much working out the logistics -- I mean, there were a lot of patients coming out of the buildings, a lot of people coming out, mostly with minor stuff going on. We were trying to organize what was going on, but there was just so much going on so quickly that we really didn't have a chance to really get a whole treatment and triage area established.

I do remember when we were coming over from West and Vesey we went down -- we went east on Vesey Street. I remember just as we came past

the PATH train by Seven World Trade, the entrance to the PATH train over there, just as we came out from underneath that underpass right there, we saw a whole bunch of what I thought -- and I don't know but I thought was airplane parts, pieces of the airplane.

I commented to Janice -- I was commenting in my own words about all of this -- all these pieces of plane that were hanging out -- that were just laying on the ground.

I got over to the other side. We set up the area. I remember there were people coming up asking us if they could help, people that were trained, doctors and nurses. Everybody was volunteering to help. They were just dragging people out to us in the area there.

I remember that Dr. Cherson came up at some point with Manny Delgado, helping us out over there. There were a whole bunch of units. I remember the Beekman unit was there. There were BLS units. Cabrini was there, New York Hospital. Cornell was there. There were some EMS units. I remember Alex Loudski being there, doing some tracking for Lieutenant Davila.

And then I remember someone coming up to me and telling me they were 49 Henry, a haztac truck, and they took out their hazmat tape and they cordoned off the whole area. We started to get people who weren't patients, throwing them out of the area and just bringing patients in there.

Let me see what else. There were a whole bunch of people coming over to us, units just coming in and telling us that they were helping us out. And I really don't remember all the units because there was -- a lot of it's a blur.

I remember them telling us that some cops came out of the building -- after we had started to establish in this chaotic area, a triage area. Even though it was chaotic, we still had some -- something going on there. We had divided all the stable people and all the critical people. We were taking and moving out the critical people as they came. We were actually starting to move out the stable people, some of the stable people, also.

I remember cops coming out of the World

Trade Center saying that there were a whole bunch of people stuck in an elevator shaft and that they needed us to go in there and bring them out. We were like you have to bring them out to us.

Some ESU cops -- the next thing I remember was quickly getting from one of the medics reevaluating patients and who really was -- we did a whole re-triaging the critical and non-critical patients.

I remember them then bringing out this lady on a door that they had made a makeshift long board for her. They put her on the board, and she had burns on her and she had this back injury.

I remember Dr. Cherson saying that we have no time, because there was a doctor there also that wanted to do, you know, multi traumas with sterile -- with water and everything for the burns. Dr. Cherson was saying, we need to get these critical patients out of here, go to the hospital.

I remember there was a lot of -- and you couldn't control it. A lot of -- as ambulances were coming in, patients, they weren't

even getting to the triage area but they were just getting loaded up with patients and going.

I remember Commissioner Drury coming up to me and saying to me, "Where is the command post?" I sent him to the other side to West Street.

Cops coming and helping. Everyone was just coming and helping, but it was so chaotic. Actually now it's kind of like really a blur.

Then I just remember that, distinct noise like an airplane being on a runway and it's ready to take off. I heard the loud roaring of like the engines, and I thought another plane was hitting the building.

Someone yelled run. I looked up, and the top of the tower I saw was starting to move over. It was bending like it was going to come down. Everybody started running. I ran up the block, and I didn't know what to do. I was all confused. I mean, everyone was running. People were falling on the floor. Nobody was helping to do anything. Everybody was just running for their life.

I know I made it about a third of the

way up the block, and I went to go get underneath a car, the trunk area of the car. I slid underneath there. And as I slid underneath there, this big blast just came and knocked me down the rest of the way.

I remember my helmet falling off, and I was in the fetal position underneath the car. As I turned my head to see what was going on, to see if I could see underneath the car, because I really didn't know what was happening, I thought a plane had actually hit the building, a third plane. It was just this huge blast of smoke that hit me in the face, white smoke. Then it was pitch-black. I couldn't even see.

I didn't think I was going to die from stuff falling; I thought I was going to die from the asphyxiation. It was just incredible. I couldn't breathe. I was trying to spit this stuff out. I'm feeling around for my helmet because I really don't know what's going on.

I looked over my shoulder. It's pitch-black, and I remember seeing this ball of flames shooting down the street, and then it just sucked right back into itself. It went away.

Then it started to clear up.

There was a lady in front of me leaning underneath the car, and I asked the lady if she was okay. She kept saying to me: No, I'm not okay, no, I'm not okay. I didn't know, if she wasn't okay, I couldn't do anything really for her.

So I had gotten up, out from underneath the car, and I looked around. It was still white smoke, like you couldn't breathe. For some reason I walked back towards the Trade Center, and I walked in the whole area that we had just had the triage area. I remember leaving people there, the critical people that couldn't walk, that they dragged out and they weren't there anymore. Nothing.

Ambulances were trashed over there. There were cars that were parked in the middle of the street, marked, unmarked police cars. I don't know who they belonged to. Things were just crushed and blown out.

I was walking around. I was walking towards the Trade Center, and someone -- an EMT came up to me and kept on saying, Bruce, are you



okay, are you okay. It was Jai Zion of Battalion 4. I was like yeah, I'm okay, I'm okay.

He said come with me. I said no, I've got to look for everybody. I've got to start to regroup everybody. He's said no, come with me, come with me. I really don't have time for this. I said you go and come with me to the area.

Then I started walking back up the block in the opposite direction of the Trade Center, and I ran into -- the first one that I ran into that I knew was Bill Melarango, Lieutenant Melarango. I saw him. He was walking up the block. He turned around and walked up the block.

Then I ran into -- at the corner of Broadway and Fulton, I ran into Jay Swithers. I also remember running into Bonnie -- I don't know what Bonnie's last name is. She works down in BHS. She's a medic who worked down in BHS. I don't know what her last name was. I remember running into her, and she was helping someone walk.

I got on the radio at this point, because I had a radio with me. I told them -- I

heard Captain Sickles on the radio, talking on the radio now. I told him that we were regrouping and we were now at Broadway and Fulton for a triage area.

We found an ambulance that was just driving into the area, and we stopped them. We had a whole bunch of people just coming to the ambulance. People were bringing out stuff from stores, wheel barrows, garbage cans filled with water and drink and stuff like that.

I remember going into the ambulance looking for a mask, and I couldn't find one. So I took a cravat and I tied it around my face like a bandanna so I wouldn't get killed by this smoke.

I don't even know how long we were there. I remember Captain Sickles on the radio telling us that we needed resources over there. I remember seeing a fireman riding a motorcycle coming -- driving down there.

I was talking to Jai and trying to say to Jai I lost Janice, I lost Phil Ashby. He was a medic that was with us. You know, all the people that I didn't know where they were.

Anybody who was with us in our triage area, I had no clue as to where they were.

Then I ran into Dr. Cherson, and he's like where's Manny Delgado? We couldn't find Manny. We were looking for Manny. So we were like let's get this triage area and we'll find him. So now we were getting the triage area back in order, and he was helping us out.

We didn't know what was going on really with anybody. I remember seeing Car 33 pull up and Lieutenant Mendez was in the car and Dr. Garcia was in the car. I don't know who else. And Jai was there and his ambulance crew. I remember St. John's paramedics were there in this area.

We were getting overwhelmed with patients. We were just throwing patients into the ambulance. There were people coughing up, lying on the ground there.

Then before -- all I know is that someone yelled another building -- the next building -- the other building's coming down. I didn't even hear the rumble this time. I just started running. I ran up a block. I didn't

know what block at the time it was, but I figured out afterwards where I came out. I ran up Ann Street.

I was running up Ann Street, and there was a bay door open, a loading dock bay door. I saw a few people running in there, and I ran in there. I ran in, kept running into the bay. I rested on like the step where the trucks back up into to make it level.

I remember them yelling close the door, close the door, close the door. All I know is I looked over my shoulder and I saw that big mushroom cloud coming in the door again. I jumped up on the bay, on the dock, and I ran into the building with all these other people running into the building.

I just kept running, down -- everybody was running down two stories. I was running down two stories with them. We went into the basement, and I remember [REDACTED] was with us. It was just me and him in this building. I told [REDACTED] -- I said, come on, we've got to go back upstairs. He said I'm not going back upstairs, I can't, I can't. Okay, stay down here, I'm going

to go upstairs and check it out.

We couldn't find our way out of the building. We eventually came out in some diner that was part of the building, a little restaurant, that was part of the building. Everybody was in there: cops, people -- I remember I ran into a traffic agent telling me that she was having an asthma attack. I told her to just sit there, relax, I don't have any equipment with me.

Then I came out of the building and I was like -- now it was a ghost town. I mean, after the second tower came down, Broadway -- there were cars, emergency vehicles all over the place, but there was nobody to be found.

So I walked out. Again I ran into Dr. Cherson, for the second time. Every time a tower dropped, I'd find him. He was the only one that I would find. So this time I decided to stick with him.

We found Pat Scaringello there. He was walking around in a daze. I said come on. I hear on the radio -- now I'm not talking on the radio. My battery is going dead. It's

beeping -- it was one of those new radios. It was beeping away. I told him that I heard them on the radio anyone south of the event should go to the ferry terminal; everybody north should go to Chelsea Piers.

So I was like -- we're right smack in the middle. Let's start making our way. I told Dr. Cherson and Scaringello let's start making our way to the ferry terminal. So we said, you know what, we're not taking any chances. I said let's walk along the water so it's all clear.

So I remember we started walking the wrong way. We were walking north on Broadway, because we really didn't know where we were. I worked lower Manhattan. I remember the Brooklyn Bridge. I remember people coming off.

I remember we started to walk north on Broadway, and we saw this unmarked car -- we didn't know who it belonged to -- and a cop, an ESU cop, in the car in the passenger seat not moving. We were banging on the window. He didn't do anything. We opened the door, and he was in there petrified. We just closed the door and left him.

We had seen an ambulance come over. They were going back to Brooklyn. They were getting out of there. Then we started walking in the right direction, and we walked up some street. I don't even know what street we walked up. I think it was Fulton Street. We ended up walking up, me, Dr. Cherson and Pat Scaringello, walking up Fulton Street to the east side to the seaport.

We found the St. John's medics -- we found the ambulance from St. John's. There was nobody in it, and it was running.

Then we were walking up to where we found Manny Delgado right by Beekman Hospital. He was in that little square by Fulton Street -- and I don't even know what the heck the name of the street was. We found him standing there. So we got him together, and Pat.

Then we hiked it. First I went to the ER to see who was in the ER. I saw a lot of ambulances there. I was trying to gather everybody to get them. But none of them were our ambulances. They all belonged to the volunteers.

I walked inside to the ER, and it was a

madhouse in the ER, people all over the place. I remember saying you know what, I can't do anything here, there's nobody from us. So I walked out with Scaringello and left him there. He didn't want to come with us to the ferry terminal.

So me, Manny and the doctor hiked it to the ferry terminal, and that's where we found Chief Basile standing there with Louie Cook. We were talking with him, and he said that we were putting together a treatment area up on the second floor of the ferry terminal, and he put me in charge of it, going to put it all together with Lisa Desena. She was the ALS coordinator for Division 4.

So we were there. We set up everything over there. We set up everything over there, and we were just -- people were coming in dribs and drabs, but more emergency personnel. They were making this a staging area.

That was it. I mean, we stayed there until like 4:00. They brought food in. I ran into EMT Zion again. I mean, there were no real specifics going on there. That was the first



time I ran into Chief McCracken. The first time was there where I ran into him with Pauline Cronin.

I got to use the phone for the first time. His phone was the only phone. I tried on my cell phone to make phone calls to tell someone I was okay. I couldn't get through. So I finally got through on Chief McCracken's phone. I called here and spoke to Kathleen McCrory to call my wife and my mother to tell them I was okay.

A lot of people were coming into the ferry terminal. I remember that off of the boats -- firemen were coming off of the boats from Staten Island. We set up a whole treatment and triage area over there.

And we stayed there until like 4:00. Then we wanted to get out of there. So I left Chief Basile, Louie Cook, Chief Villani was there and a whole bunch of other people. We decided it was time for us to leave.

Me, Manny and the doctor found his car. We walked back to Broadway and Fulton, found his car and drove his car out of there and went to

Battalion 4 to clean up. Some guy cleaned our car for us at Battalion 4. We were in Dr. Cherson's car, because the car I drove over there, I have no idea what had happened to it.

They told us -- after we got done at Battalion 4 and making phone calls -- because they actually had phones working at the time. I remember calling the office here, and this was like after 4:00 already.

So then I -- what did we do? We were coming back to Metrotech here after 4:00, and they told us on the radio that they wanted us to go to Chambers and West Street to the command post there. So we drove back there, and we stayed there till -- I stayed there till like 10:00 at night.

Dr. Cherson was doing what he had to do. Manny Delgado, about five minutes before me, caught a ride back to Metrotech. I caught a ride back. I took Chief McCracken's car back to Metrotech at 10:00 at night with Lieutenant Cronin. There was someone else in the car with us; I can't remember who. Some Chief's aide came back with us? I don't remember who came back

with us here to Metrotech.

We cleaned off the car. They brought me back in here and it was like go downstairs, get into uniform, take a shower. Then I took a shower and went home, and that was it for the day.

To think about the people, all the EMTs that were lost and the medics that were lost in the World Trade Center, were all from our one triage area. And I don't know whether it was after the first collapse or the second collapse, because I never saw them -- I never saw anybody from our triage area after the first collapse.

I was like I don't even know why I didn't go -- I never went back to West Street. I remember things like Captain Olszewski telling me in the triage area, maybe it would be a good idea to move the triage area back a little bit and I told her no, everything looked like it was starting to get organized. We wanted to set up a staging area, and we had set one up and it wasn't working because units were coming in from all over the place and just parking all over the street.

So I said well, let's just leave them park on Church Street. Janice said all that debris down there. I said that's the whole point, nobody's going to go down into that area because -- this was before the buildings collapsed. There's debris there, but there's like no one going over that area. So that would be a good area to start parking the ambulances, because I had seen the command car from Battalion 4 parked there.

I don't know. I think that's -- you run in with Dr. -- with other people. You start talking to them. Like I was talking to Jay Swithers, telling me when I saw him, you know, that things had occurred that I don't even remember, because people were asking me like the most ridiculous things like are any ACRs being done on these patients, any tracking being done on these patients.

I was like you guys have got to be kidding. Like who really cares about that right now? There were so many patients there, we have no way of tracking them, you know. I couldn't believe supervisors were actually asking me these

questions. I was like to hell with it. You get your tracking done at another time.

I remember Amy Monroe in our triage area. I remember she was in charge of the transportation end of it. Everybody who had transportation, Captain Olszewski told her to take transportation for our area. So she was handling that.

I don't know. It's all like kind of a blur. The worst part about it is just remembering that thick, black smoke and that you couldn't breathe in it and worrying what was going to happen to me, am I going to die right here and now.

The other thing that went through my mind was after I realized it was a terrorist attack, when the building came down, I didn't know it was the building coming -- I thought a third plane had hit the building, causing the building to come down. The things that went through my mind was there chemical warfare going on now. I mean, what's going on? I didn't realize -- I had no concept of what was going on. So many things going through your head.

That was really about it, that I remember. Little things that I don't remember, someone -- how people tell you about it and you just -- oh, yeah, that did happen. They refresh your memory. But that's about all that I can remember from my memory right now.

Q. Anything else you wanted to add, Bruce?

A. No.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview with Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck.

The time now is 1155 hours.

Thanks, Bruce.

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File No. 9110087

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT CHARLES FRASER

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

C. FRASER

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time now is 1007 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

A. Lieutenant Charles Fraser, EMS Division 4.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department.

We're conducting the interview at the conference room of the Division 4 EMS command at Queens General and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present for the interview is.

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi, investigations and trials.

Q. Go ahead, sir. We're looking into your participation in the World Trade Center incident.

A. The morning of the incident, I was at the EMS Academy at Fort Totten in Queens and we were alerted that there was a plane crash at the World Trade Center. We saw a small clip of it on television. Shortly thereafter I was advised to start out to the scene with Lieutenant James Scullion. That was at the



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direction of Chief Charlie Wells that they were doing a recall of the hazmat trained and special operations division supervisors.

I started out in the Bronco with him. He was driving and he said that we had gotten Charlie Wells on the cell phone and he said to direct ourselves into the lobby of 2 World Trade Center and set up operations there and that we would just coordinate with him what needed to be done. We took the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway over to the Brooklyn Bridge, and I recall we got about a quarter of the way onto the bridge and there were thousands of people just evacuating into Brooklyn over the bridge. As we headed into Manhattan, I looked over and we started to see the first tower come down, just a devastating sight, to the point where we had to physically stop because there were police cars in front of us. We looked over and I remember thinking, oh, my God, you'll never see this in your life again, and I remember actually blessing myself with the sign of a cross thinking, my God, there were people in there, there were guys in there, let alone our people, between police, fire and civilians.

We came over the bridge, we went over Park Row, past City Hall, which they looked like they were

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attempting to secure and lock that down. We came down Park Row to Fulton Street, we came across Fulton, and as we pulled up on Church Street, we got out of the vehicle, we started to get on our bunker pants and get dressed ready to go into 2 World Trade when the second building started to come down and we heard on the radio a lot of people screaming Mayday, evacuate, it's coming down. We started to look up and we could see what looked like the top of this tower coming down at us, and then like a roller coaster, like a wooden roller coaster sound, and just bodies all over the ground, hitting the ground.

We got into the vehicle, we started to pull out, we made a tight U-turn and we actually struck two metal parking stanchions that were in the way because there were a lot of vehicles on the street that we were trying to get around, and as we struck these two, the bumper came up into the front end of the vehicle and then on top of that two emergency service officers jumped onto the back of the vehicle and actually threw their weapons into the back window and jumped onto the vehicle, and I watched through the rear as people just like disappeared into the black smoke. We made it about a half a block to the east on Fulton and we

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stopped the vehicle. We couldn't proceed any further and we were just engulfed in a cloud. You couldn't see probably five feet in front of you, and then it just got darker and darker, the wind picked up, and then this stuff started hitting the vehicle, just large chunks of computer monitors and concrete and panes of glass. Then Jimmy Scullion with was able to get the vehicle started again. We drove up further. We actually drove out of it onto Park Row and we stopped at Park Row and we waited I'd say probably about ten minutes or so because you just couldn't proceed. You couldn't see where you were going. You couldn't move.

We walked back down Fulton Street to Church, and when we got to Church Street, I guess we were on like Barclay and Church, we had noticed that there was a large setup of police emergency service. That's where we encountered the first EMS unit, 49 Henry. It was Kevin Barrett and Brendan Mulroy, two of our hazmat trained EMTs. We grouped them up and took them with us, and the next thing we did, I ran into Chief McCracken's son and he had come in to the scene and he had been inquiring if anybody had heard of his father. I didn't hear him on the radio. I'd heard Captain Deshore on the radio quite a bit giving updates on

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patient counts and access, and then I didn't hear her on the radio anymore. There was a lot of silence on the radio.

Q. What frequency were you on?

A. I was on the Citywide command frequency. It was a lot of silence, nobody talking over EMS.

Then we proceeded down into the subway station at Barclay Street and Church because they said that there was numerous people down there trapped towards West Street. We walked from Church all the way down to Barclay and West, and we couldn't exit the subway because there was so much debris and everything above us, but there were people down there. So we ended up coming out by -- I guess back to West Street, and as we came out on West Street, I ran into Lieutenant Kevin Haugh, who had responded down from Manhattan North, and what we started to do was pretty much safety and accountability, trying to find EMTs and medics that were just wandering. It was like they were shell shocked. They had lost their partners, they couldn't recall where they were, who they were with, where their vehicle was. We commandeered a city bus that was parked on West Street and we started to put everybody into that vehicle.

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The next one I ran into was Chief John Peruggia. He was establishing a command post on West Street by Barclay and he had assigned myself and Lieutenant Scullion and Lieutenant Haugh to do the safety officer and to start doing accountability and to try and access vehicles that were down on Liberty Street. There were numerous ambulances, they said, that were buried and could we get down there to ID these vehicles and/or the people.

As we headed on down, it ended up we couldn't walk any further because the bridge had dropped across West Street. So what I ended up -- what we did was we went into 3 Financial, the American Express Building, we worked our way through the lobbies and we actually came out on the other side by Liberty. As I recall, I think there were about ten or eleven ambulances there and they were all buried in debris. Two of them were burning, actively burning. We had taken the VIN numbers off of them, the vehicle ID number, so that we could match it up, and later on in the tour we went to the Police Department and they were able to run the VIN number and give us the vehicle number and then trace down the crew that was with that.

The other ambulances that were intact, we

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cleaned them off as much as we could, we spray painted them to ID what they were, whether it was fire, one was a Metro Care ambulance, and I remember there was a civilian dead next to that Metro Care ambulance but half under the vehicle and the legs were out, and as we pulled the person out to kind of see, the whole back of her head was blown off and it's like she was just decapitated. But she wasn't in a uniform. She was in civilian attire. So we covered her over with a blanket and then we ended up going through these vehicles, getting personal effects out that we could. You know, crews usually have a bag with personal effects. We went through there and tried to ID who was even in that vehicle. Once we obtained that information, we gave it to Captain Dave Fenton, who was doing accountability by then. This was about, I guess, 1:30, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Then as we proceeded on, most of the rest of the evening I was doing safety officer work and accountability stuff, working mainly off of the back side by North End there, I would say, up by 2 World Financial Center and the Winter Garden, assisting with setting up temporary morgue and safety of EMS people because we had a lot of off-duty people that weren't

C. FRASER

even tagged in the system that we didn't even know where they were, taking down their Social Security number, regrouping them, keeping them into a triage treatment area.

I think the hardest part that we had on the overnight -- well, I would say right after and preceding the second collapse and then on into the afternoon was just we had no resources, we had no equipment, we had nothing. And radio communications, same thing, we just couldn't get through. You couldn't get through no matter what you tried to do accountability.

Q. The off-duty people, anybody that you recognized, any names offhand?

A. I know Maureen Bartwink from Battalion 49 was there. She had come down with her partner, which was Ron McCue. They were together. Jack O'Loughlin, a lieutenant from Queens was there. Early on, as a matter of fact, we had turned over a triage area that we set up by Park Row and Fulton Street, we had set up a large triage treatment area prior to going into that subway entrance. Lieutenant Scullion and I had gotten a few ambulance resources together along with St. Vincent's Hospital and Lieutenant O'Loughlin said he

C. FRASER

would take over that sector so that we could proceed on when we got this request that there were people in the subway. So I know he was there off duty. But that's about it that I can recall offhand.

Q. Did you ever enter any of the towers?

A. No.

Q. The second one or --

A. No. They collapsed and on our way back we had been sent -- we had gotten sidetracked prior to reporting to Chief Peruggia because they said that there were five police officers that were buried, and that would be, I guess, I'm looking at 1 World Trade Center, and they were in between 6 and 1 World Trade, and we had gotten down there and ended up -- I remember a police officer coming to me and he had a serious hand injury, actually, it was a detective, in uniform with a detective shield, and he had a left hand with serious, serious injury, burned, cut down to the bone, and we had treated him with St. Vincent's paramedics and they had removed him to a treatment area. But when we tried to get up into where these officers were, it was like walking in snow. Every three footsteps you took, you were back one, and it was just like in a deep, muddy slush.



C. FRASER

Most of the entry that we did was down by around 1 World Trade and 3 World Trade later in the afternoon because we had a lot of EMS people. Some were in uniform, some weren't in uniform, and they were just wandering about, like trying to help out in different areas. So what we had worked to do was pull those people out and get them into a unified treatment area so that we'd have accountability of them.

I'm thinking of who. I know I had Steve Scarinzi with me from Battalion 49. He had come down off duty and I linked up with him, I guess, 1:00, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, and I had him for a good part of the evening with us.

Q. Where did you leave the Bronco?

A. The Bronco was left on Park Row right by I guess Broadway, Park Row and Broadway, because right here is a cutout on the map where there's some parking stanchion. We had parked it there. There was significant damage to the front end from us trying to pull out. Luckily enough, we had particulate masks that we had found in the vehicle, so we were able to get masks on right away because I don't think we would have been able to proceed any further. I mean, it was just you couldn't breathe, it was just so thick, and

C. FRASER

those masks only lasted probably 15 minutes before you were saturated.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important, any other recollections or impressions that you'd like to add before we conclude?

A. Not really, no.

MR. FEILER: Okay. I want to thank you on behalf of the Department for conducting the interview with us. The time now is 1021 hours and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110088

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SAL SANGENTI

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

## S. SANGENTI

MONTE FEILER: Today's date is October 16, 2001. The time now is 9:48. This is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank and assigned command.

SAL SANGENTI: EMT Sal Sangenti, assistant to the division 4 commander.

Q: Of the New York City Fire Department. We are conducting the interview at the conference room of the Division 4 EMS command, Queens General, regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present at the interview is...

DIANA MAGGI: Diana Maggi, Investigations and Trials.

Q: Go ahead starting with when you first became aware of the incident and the events surrounding that.

A: Okay, I was sitting in the office waiting for Chief Carrasquillo to come into the office, he notified me by phone telling me that we were going to the 1040 at the World Trade Center. I was aware of this because we were all monitoring CAD, and at that point myself, Jason Katz, who is Chief Day's aide, and Captain Rivera were here and we all went into Chief Carrasquillo's car and responded to the scene. We went to the command post and at that time, both towers were engulfed. As we were setting up, I couldn't tell you a time frame, but at that point, when we were setting up, the first building collapsed.

Q: When you arrived, where did the vehicle stop? Where did you park?

## S. SANGENTI

A: On West, I can't tell you the street...I am bad with directions in Queens, but in Manhattan it was even worse. But I know we were on West.

Q: Okay, and you said you went to the EMS command post?

A: The command post there. Chief Ganci was there, Chief Gombo, Captain Sickles, Lieutenant Moore, myself, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Browne, Jason Katz, I think that was it. All I remember.

Q: Where was that located?

A: That was across the street on West. It was in front of a parking garage.

Q: Was it on the Trade Center side of West, or on the River side?

A: It was on...I don't remember. It was, it had to be the Trade Center...

Q: Do you remember crossing over a barrier?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: It was on the West side, I guess the water side.

Q: Then what happened?

A: Then at that point we were there just trying to strategize and at that point, the building collapsed. Myself and Chief Carrasquillo and numerous people ran into the garage and I found a little room to the left side of the garage. It was myself, a Port Authority female Sargent, and a detective were in the room. We had air for the first 20 seconds, then the room got engulfed. The room had air conditioning, so at that point the

S. SANGENTI

air started to circulate a little, and we kind of got our composure, but unfortunately, there was debris in front of the room now and we were stuck in the room. I kind of told everybody, just relax. I don't know how I took the initiative, but I did, told everybody just relax. The woman, I wiped her face off cause she was really engulfed with the ashes. The ash and the concrete and all the other stuff, and the time frame I couldn't tell you. But at that point we were able to get out and I finally heard a fireman who said come on, let's go through the garage. We went through the garage and we ended up outside, I couldn't tell you exactly where I was. I lost my whole, you know...

Q: How were you able to get out of the room?

A: Actually we kind of, it was maybe 2 ½ maybe 3 feet of debris, and we just kicked it. We kicked as much as we could. It was a lot of paper, dust, actually I remember kicking a vehicle mirror. Because I stepped on it and I thought I stepped on someone's glasses, and it was an actual mirror. At that point, we got out and we walked through the garage and came up where I couldn't tell you.

Q: Did you have any radio or cell phones?

A: I had a radio and my own personal cell phone.

Q: Did any of them work down there?

A: No. Actually, I thought I lost my phone, but I had everything in tact, then I couldn't anybody. The only people I was with were the fireman, the Port Authority Sargent, and the detective. That was it.

Q: Did you get anybody's name or commands?

## S. SANGENTI

A: There were no names, and at this point that I remember, I didn't see any EMS people at all. At that point, I really thought that Chief Carrasquillo was gone. Because the way it works is, if you ran to the sides I don't know if you would have survived. The building was the way to go cause you had some kind of cover. That was it, and then it felt like an hour, but it was probably just minutes that I walked. I walked to probably by...I'll tell you in a second, I'm bad with directions...it was by the water, so it has to be, I couldn't even tell you, I'm sorry. I remember walking towards the water, I remember seeing the water, and I must have walked like four blocks and I finally saw Chief Carrasquillo.

Q: And where was he?

A: He? Again, I know he was there with Chief Gombo and Chief Kowalczyk. Hugged them and thanked them, that was it. At that point, the second collapse went and we were probably about a block away. The dust and all the other stuff hit us and at that point I couldn't get my composure. I just sat there and relaxed and at that point we started to get everyone together, and we took it from there. We went to Chambers and West and that's when they established a command post. Me, Ron Pfeffer, and at that point was when everyone started to come, Charlie Wells, J.P. Martin. Then everything started to, you know, fall into place.

Q: Do you know the location where you met them? Where they met you actually...

## S. SANGENTI

A: Actually it was in the back, where's the school? Where's Stuyvesant?

Q: I think Stuyvesant is up here by Chambers Street.

A: So what I did was I walked over here. They were gonna establish a command post at Stuyvesant, but they weren't sure if there was a gas leak in the school, or it was running underneath the school. So they moved everything, they moved everything to Chambers and West.

Q: Did you ever enter any of the buildings?

A: The Trade Centers? No.

Q: Number 7 World Trade Center?

A: No.

Q: Did you have to treat any patients?

A: I mostly just helped. I helped a lady, she was walking, when I finally got out of the garage, there was a lady there. She was pretty much just dazed, and I helped her I said come on, keep walking, keep walking, and that was it.

Q: Is there anything else that you felt was important? Any other people that you may have seen: firefighters, EMS?

A: No, pretty much like I said, the only people that I know are the chiefs, cause I work with them. I remember seeing Chief Ganci, I remember seeing Chief Gombo, Chief Kowalczyk, Chief Carrasquillo. But once I got into the garage, I lost everyone.



## S. SANGENTI

Q: Okay, anything else?

A: That's it.

Q: I want to thank you for your time so we can conduct these interviews, and the time is 9:57. This interview is concluded.

File No. 9110089

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF PEDRO CARRASQUILLO

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time now is 9:16 hours. This is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview of the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area of command.

CHIEF CARRASQUILLO: Pedro Carrasquillo, Division 4, EMS command.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department.

We're conducting the interview in the conference room of Division 4 EMS command, the property of Queens General Hospital. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Also present is --

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi, investigations and trials.

Q. Go ahead, sir.

A. Heading into the office that morning, when on the air, I heard conditions 04, Lieutenant Rene Davila, sounding very anxious on the radio stating that there was some form of

explosion. I didn't catch it all. I raised the volume and then heard him indicate that there was a plane that ran into the side of the World Trade Center.

So right away I started continuing into Queens General. I called citywide. I told them that I would be responding. I came by Queens General on my way from home, picked up Sal Sangeniti, picked up Captain J.R. Rivera, and I picked up Jason Katz, who were here waiting for me.

We continued in. Then we heard the report of a second airplane crashing into the other tower. Initially I thought it was just one of the commuter planes, or one of the sight-seeing planes along the water there, but then when I heard the second plane, then right away I thought it must have been terrorist activity, but still not knowing what type of aircraft went into the building.

So we responded in. Traffic was heavy. We were able to get through into the express lane and went in through the Midtown Tunnel, taking the drive southbound and seeing the smoke and

seeing the World Trade Center. At one point, seeing the gaping hole on one of the towers and the smoke on the other going all the way up, I was thinking everybody from that point on up will probably be dead if not from the smoke, certainly from the fire.

We took the tunnel underneath the tip of Manhattan and came up alongside, I think it's the New York Athletic Club. I parked a couple blocks before the World Trade Center just because I didn't want to go too much closer with my vehicle.

I parked, got out. People were running. I got out, got my helmet, got my turnout coat. At that point, right there, there was some debris, and there were some body parts that were on the street. Some of the police officers were trying to cordon off those areas. So we were very careful when we were walking.

We went over the median onto the West side of West Street and continued up to the command post, which was directly across the street from the World Trade Center. At that point, just before I got to the command post I

saw Jack Delaney with his medics from the New York Hospital, Columbia Presbyterian, and they had their vehicles diagonally parked on West Street. They were out in front of the vehicle.

I called Jack and his men over because that location didn't seem to be a safe location because of the debris that was falling out of the buildings. So they came over by the command post. They had given them instructions, and they took off in the south direction to their assignment.

I reported to the command post. Chief Gombo was there. I remember seeing Chief Browne and Jason Katz, who came with me, went with Chief Brown. They got their assignment, and they headed in a south direction.

I hadn't gotten my assignment yet. We were talking. Then all of a sudden we heard a noise. People started running. People were saying that the building was collapsing. At that point I heard the noise. It was enough for me to react and run.

I didn't turn around to look. I just heard the noise coming down, and it was like a

jet engine, just getting louder and louder.

At that moment I'm thinking which way to run, north or south. And it seemed like the corners on either direction was falling and I wouldn't be able to outrun this thing. So we all retreated into a garage that had a ramp going down directly across the street. I think it was the American Express building or one of those buildings there.

We went in. As we're running down, I'm looking at where I can hide. There were some little cutouts as you're going down the ramp. So I went to one of them. There were three other firefighters there. We squatted down. Just as we did that, everything just passed right through into the tunnel, into the garage ramp.

At that moment everything was just total darkness. You couldn't see anything. You couldn't breathe. We were coughing. I got out my handkerchief so I could at least use that as some type of filter. I got a couple breaths, and then you're just coughing.

Firefighters there had on their respirators, and then some of them had

flashlights. So at least we were able to head -- we were all starting to head in the up ramp direction going up, which is the way that we had come down.

I'm hearing people saying that we were sealed in. So right away the first thing is, that's it, this is how we're going to die, down here. I remember Chief Ganci behind me, hearing his voice, stating that we have to move up. Up is out.

So we started to go up. We're getting towards the top, and you couldn't see. There was total, total darkness. I see a flashlight shining from the top and somebody screaming down that this is outside. We started working our way up towards that light, and there was debris all over. So you really had to be careful on how you were stepping because you would trip and fall.

When we got outside, there was a suburban right next to the entrance. I don't know if it was pushed up there or how it got there. So at that point you still couldn't see anything, but you could see silhouettes of trees, so we knew we were on the outside.



I started heading north to the corner, which is Vesey Street, and there we started to regroup some of the people. As I was walking West on Vesey, I ran into Captain Stone, who appeared to be injured. His shoulder was hurting him. I saw Artie Gonzalez who was a paramedic out of Bellevue that was there.

Then I went into the lobby of the American Express building. In the lobby I ran into a couple of other EMTs, but at that point I really couldn't see much because I was covered in the soot. So I was able to get some water to clean my face, cough, spit, gargle, trying to get some of that soot out of me and clean my glasses.

Then we started -- we were hearing of possible gas leaks and possibly the next building coming down. So we started to get everybody mobilized at the west -- West of West Street by --

Q. I have a map.

A. -- Vesey and North Street, I believe it was. We started to go up Vesey Street, and we started heading towards North End. At North End on the northeast corner there's an Embassy

Suites. We started to make that a triage treatment area for all the people that we were bringing in.

At that location we started to meet Captain Sickles, J.R. Rivera again, Sal, I saw them, because we lost contact once we ran down into the garage. Then Chief Gombo was there, Chief Pascale. I don't know where they were before. So we started making a treatment area.

Then I went back down Vesey Street to make sure that everybody started to clear out from the American Express lobby that we were at.

Then I decided to take a walk towards West Street just to see if in fact that tower, the whole tower, had come down, which confirmed, yes, that it was completely down.

I started to walk back again, making sure everybody was out, and started to get all the vehicles, all the personnel to North End.

As I was walking back, I heard the second sound, which was the second building coming down. I ran into the American Express or right in between here, looked around. I saw a lot of windows. Now I'm looking for a place that

I'm not going to get hit with flying debris.

I had two EMTs, that I don't know who they were, male and female. I told them come on this way. There was a civilian that was going to walk out. I said you can't walk out there, the tower is collapsing. I grabbed him. Then we went behind this marble pillar, a huge marble pillar with a wall behind it, back there and squatted down.

The second wave came down through Vesey Street, blowing out the windows along the sides there. Then I told the guy can we get out another way, and he said yes. We were able to go through some hallway. We came out on North Street. We were able to go underneath and came out here and then walked over to the Embassy Suites lobby there.

There we tried to regroup who was going where. Chief Gombo, everybody was going now to I think it was police headquarters. They told me to initially go to Chelsea, but then they assigned somebody else to Chelsea and I stood there.

Q. How did you receive those orders?

A. No, no, no, we were there in the lobby. Chief Gombo was there, Peruggia was there, Fran was there, Chief Pascale and myself.

Q. That was in the lobby of American Express?

A. No, this was in the lobby of the Embassy Suites.

So everybody got their assignments. I think Chief Basile was there as well. He went to the ferry terminal. He was working his way out to the ferry terminal, I believe. Chief Villani was heading that direction as well. Chief Pascale went to the Chelsea Piers for the staging area out there. And I stood at Vesey.

We were treating people, and we started to -- I started to let everybody -- we need to get these people into vehicles and out of here and to the hospital or to an area of Chambers Street, because now we're getting reports there was gas leaking and possibly rupturing. So we were not in a safe area.

We started to do that. We got everybody outside. Then we drove all the vehicles -- some of the patients got into the

vehicles, and we transported them out to the area hospitals. The rest of the vehicles continued now northbound to Chambers Street.

At Chambers Street, we regrouped there, and we were going to start a treatment area by the grass area. We went up Vesey, and we went up West End. We worked our way back here to Chambers Street, which is right near Stuyvesant School.

We were going to go into this area that's indicated North Park to set up some sort of a treatment area there so that in the event that we needed to transport people and the area was blocked off and we couldn't get vehicles, there were some ships, boats, that were coming in. So we would use them to get the people out of there and take them either uptown, downtown or to Jersey, if needed.

At that point, however someone came by and we had to evacuate that area because there were gas lines underneath there and that would possibly blow up. So we regrouped then and just went down the block on Chambers, and we went to Chambers and West.

As we were retreating from some of these places -- I mean, a lot of equipment too was just left behind, and vehicles, until we were able to come back later on. At any rate, we regrouped to Chambers and West. Chief Peruggia and myself were there. Then we set tried to set up a plan.

He stood in control of communications, and then I went as the liaison with OEM at the Fire Department. And we just kept on operating at that location with some of our units. As we would get patients, we would treat them and take them out of there or transport them or treat them and release.

At that point we wound up getting a large contingency of people from the academy. So they were outside, and we told the captain from the academy -- I don't know his name -- to get all the personnel and bring them into the area of Stuyvesant School and leave them in there, because outside were all the dust -- every time the vehicles drove by, it just picked up all the dust and debris. Then as we were going to utilize them, then we would call them.

Then I just worked as the liaison office with OEM, and I was just coordinating whatever resource they needed. Then we started to try to get a sense of who was missing. We didn't know how many units were assigned and so on. So we just took a tally of the units nearby.

Then we just continued to operate. I attended a couple of the OEM meetings, what we needed, where we were going to set up. We talked about possibly having a field hospital. We were going to set it up at the North Park area, because now it was secured so we were able to get -- we were going to try to get the Parks Department to set up some tents.

We had a Coast Guard cutter that was anchored along the side, and they were able to provide us with generator power and supplies and water and so on.

So that was a plan. We were trying to get a hold of the medical examiner to set up a morgue sector or request for a team, because we knew we were going to have to process a lot of bodies there. So we were trying not to anticipate a lot of things.

Following the meeting, OEM -- because OEM got established in the Stuyvesant School, we were there. They told us in the morning they were going to get a ship, a hospital ship, that was coming in and anchoring at the pier. Then the rest of the resources and some troops and whatever things that we needed.

So we spoke about DMAT teams coming in to try to set up as treatment areas and just continue to operate there throughout the night.

Q. When you were coming in, you said that you heard Lieutenant Davila talking. Was that on citywide?

A. Citywide, yeah.

Q. That's the frequency that you were listening to?

A. Yeah.

Q. And when you called citywide, you did that by radio or telephone?

A. Telephone.

Q. Did they give you any specific area to respond to?

A. No. I just told them I would be heading in, going to the command post. Then I



called RCC. I called to RCC and told them call all the stations throughout the city, anybody that's going home, they have to stay, and try to keep as many people as possible, in the event that we would need more resources down there.

I wasn't the incident commander, but I'm sure that the people there had their hands full and I didn't know if any of them had relayed any information, so I just did that on my own.

And I spoke to -- just before I left here, I told the crew here and the L S U crew here to respond not to incident but just on the other side, on the Queens side of the Midtown Tunnel area. In the event if they needed them, they would be right there so they can just go in.

.....

Q. When you arrived at the scene, you came out of the tunnel that connects to the FDR Drive and the West Side Highway?

A. Correct.

Q. Where did you say you parked your vehicle?

A. I parked my vehicle on the east side of West Street or the West Side Highway right near the New York Athletic Club, the club down there.

Q. You know what, mark it if you see it on there.

A. I believe it was --

Q. Is that where the vehicle stayed for the remainder of the incident?

A. Until about 3 in the morning, when I looked for it. I brushed off all the debris.

Q. When the first building collapsed and you retreated into the underground garage, you said you met up with three firefighters. Were you able to determine their names or where they were from?

A. No.

Q. And then you heard Chief Ganci?

A. I heard his voice, yeah.

Q. You never were face-to-face with him?

A. No, you couldn't see.

Q. Did you meet up with him any time after that or you lost contact?

A. No, I went back to Vesey Street, and I went into the American Express building to try to first clean myself off and then try to establish some form of a treatment area.

Q. Other than the people that you

mentioned, did you see any other EMS officers, EMTs, medics, fire officers that you know?

A. No. Those are the people that I recall. There was another medic that I saw in the lobby, Perez, from -- I think he's -- he used to work for us. That's the only one I recall. He asked me if I was okay. Then that's when I just cleaned myself off, at least my face, anyway.

Q. Besides the American Express and the Embassy Suites, did you ever enter either one of the trade towers?

A. No.

Q. Building number seven?

A. No.

Q. Initially you said there was an EMS command post that you met up with Chief Gombo. Where was that?

A. That was there, right across the street from the Trade Center, just next to the garage.

Q. The north tower or the south tower?

A. It was in between both towers.

Q. Can you just X that, make it D.

A. I think it was in this area here,

because I remember this pedestrian bridge being on the outside and looking trying to see where. This is the area.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to add before we conclude?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: I want to thank you for your time and providing this interview. It's 9:38 hours, and we'll conclude this interview.

File No. 9110090

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ROBERT SHORT

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

R. SHORT

MONTE FEILER: Today's date is October 16, 2001. The time is 11:01 and this is Monte Feiler of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, title, and area of command.

ROBERT SHORT: Robert Short, EMT, 5071 MERV operator for Division 4.

Q: The New York City Fire Department. We are conducting this interview in the conference room of Division 4 at Queens General Hospital regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present is...

DIANA MAGGI: Diana Maggi, Investigations and Trials.

Q: Okay, if you can just start off with what your assignment was that day and how you became aware of the incident.

A: My assignment was Merv 4 operator. I got assigned, I don't remember the exact time I got assigned on the job.

Q: Who assigned you?

A: The citywide dispatcher. We were told not to go through the tunnel, so we went up 59<sup>th</sup> street. Not 59<sup>th</sup> street, Queens Boulevard, over the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, and down Second Avenue, cause they had it completely closed off. As we were going down, that's when we seen, I guess it was the second (I don't really remember) you

## R. SHORT

know, hitting the tower. Cause the first tower was on fire, as we were coming over the bridge, we saw that. Then we parked at West and Vessey.

Q: Who directed you to park there?

A: Lietenant Hadala

Q: Where did you meet up with him?

A: We all parked. He was in his command car, it was an LSU truck in front of me, then it was me with the MERV. As soon as we pulled up, we immediately were contacting patients.

Q: Okay, who was in the MERV with you?

A: A paramedic Dibriano. We started treating the patients, most of them were firefighters. I remember one--then I think the building collapsed. All the smoke, or whatever it was, the debris and everything, we got knocked out of the MERV. Whoever was in the MERV, I don't know what happened to them. Cause a lot of them ran out, ran in. All of our equipment got blown out and everything so we ended up, I don't know where I ended up because it was dark. But we ended up somewhere near the water. I was by myself. No EMS personnel, I don't know who it was, but I guess it was near the water, yeah. Then I went back to the MERV and started cleaning out the debris, cause it was mostly all dust and everything. Then a fire captain, I remember this clearly, a fire captain ran up to me and said look, I lost all of my men. I can't get into contact.

Q: Do you know what his name was?

## R. SHORT

A: No, I think he was from, I think it was Rescue 3. Cause we had Rescue 3 guys who were walking up West Street, we gave them a ride up. We rode 'em up, we said guys hop on, they hopped on, I don't know what happened after that. I heard later on they all got killed. Well, either he was from Rescue 3 or Ladder 43, I remember seeing a 3 on his hat. A white hat. On the MERV we have all the channels for the fire telephone radio, so he started doing command orders or whatever. I don't know what he was doing, and we were doing patients. Then the second building collapsed. Again, we just ran.

Q: Were you in motion at that point?

A: No, actually we stayed on Vessey.

Q: So you stayed there?

A: Yeah, we stayed there. Because I believe it was the Verizon Building, I don't know if that's on Vessey, cause I remember we started off on Vessey, and then we moved under these, like an overlook that goes across from building to building. I don't know what it is.

Q: Like a pedestrian walk?

A: Like a pedestrian walk. We moved back or forward, I don't remember. But then the second building collapsed, and then again we ran. We couldn't see nothing. Then we ended up on West and Warren by foot. We left everything there.



## R. SHORT

Q: So when you first arrived, where did you park the MERV?

A: Vessey. West and Vessey.

Q: And that's where it stayed?

A: Yes. But, oh yeah, here's the pedestrian bridge here, so I was right. We parked here in the beginning. Then the second thing collapsed and we got caught in it. Then we just started around, I don't remember, just all these people tramping on you basically. Then we moved the MERV, I guess it was up to here.

Q: So just south of the pedestrian bridge?

A: Yeah.

Q: Now were you on the river side of West Street, or on the building side?

A: On the, well at the beginning we were here, on the building side. Then when we moved it after the first collapse and everything, we moved over here somewhere, so we were near the water.

Q: So you were on the south side?

A: Yeah.

Q: And when the second collapse, where were you then?

A: Over here.

Q: You were in the vehicle?

## R. SHORT

A: Yeah, I was in the vehicle. We were in the vehicle, cause we were seeing patients, and then we were in the vehicle. When that came down, everyone just looked up and we just ran. I ran this way.

Q: Did you ever get back to the MERV?

A: Yeah, I ended up meeting up with the LSU guy, cause I didn't know where he was.

Q: What's his name?

A: Mark Mazzur. He was actually in here, because he was ahead of me with Lieutenant Hadala. So I thought, when I moved the MERV after the first collapse, I moved it up here. Cause we got the lights on, people are running and everything. I thought they were killed, cause they were over here. That's where the building with Chief Carrasquillo and Chief Browne, and everyone was over there.

Q: Did you see them there?

A: Well in the beginning, when I pulled up here, I saw their cars. We said we're gonna set up here and they went ahead. So I knew they were in the same area here. So when the second building, I guess collapsed...well, it was the first building collapsed, I moved forward, and then the second building collapsed, and that's when I walked over here and saw all the debris. That's when I said "I gotta get outta here". I started going back to the MERV, and you know, the second building, everything went off. The power and everything. So I just went up and started running this way.

## R. SHORT

Q: North up West Street?

A: Yeah, and I ended up on I think it was Warren, I think it was over here.

Q: And who treated patients on the Merv?

A: It was just me.

Q: You were the only one, you had no medics, doctors?

A: I don't know where anyone was, no. After the initial---it was me and Dibriano, but then you know, after that, it literally just blew us out of the MERV. Cause we had the back door open with the ramp, and just everything went right out the front.

Q: Did you ever see Dibriano past that time?

A: No, I didn't see him till maybe 6, 7 hours later. But I met up with Mark Mazzur. Like I said, he went in this way after the first collapse, and I was treating patients. He was trying to...cause there was a lot of rubble. So I guess he was looking for the chief, cause we didn't know where anyone was. Then the second collapse, I left it there and I ran this way. That's where I met Mark, I think it was about an hour or two later.

Q: At about Murray and West? Warren?

A: Yeah, it was up here. They had a, Hazollah ---had a big MERV, and they were cleaning us up. I had shit in my eyes, and you know...

Q: Did you get any direction from that point?

## R. SHORT

A: Well from there, the MERV was here. When I met up with Mark, and you know, they flushed out our eyes, and we washed out our face, took on a little oxygen and stuff. We went back to the scene, me and Mark Mazzur, we went back, got an ambulance, jump started the MERV, and got the LSU. Then we set up staging on I guess it was this side of Vessey, towards the water. Like right over here. Cause there was still a lot of people coming down this way. Also, we met up with Lieutenant Hadala, who lost his command car somewhere over here.

Q: Okay, so you re-located your MERV between North and West Street on Vessey?

A: Yeah, right over here I'd say. Cause this is the water, so...

Q: What ambulance did you use?

A: Um, I don't know.

Q: You don't remember where you found it?

A: No, there was people in it though.

Q: Did you recognize them?

A: No, I didn't recognize them, no.

Q: Was it a Fire Department ambulance?

A: Yes, Fire Department ambulance.

Q: Okay

## R. SHORT

A: They had cables. I said, do you have cables, and they said yes. I gotta get this thing outta here, cause of ----Then we turned it around and we set up, that's where we all kind of grouped together, we were finding people. Then we sort of set up right here, cause here's the water, and then we started taking in a lot of patients.

Q: Civilians?

A: Mostly civilians at the time, I don't think there were any firefighters.

Q: What type of injuries?

A: Eye, smoke, we have the multi-regulators. This MERV can hook up 16 people at once. Plus we had another 12 multi-regulator, and plus we had 2 more on the LSU. So we had I'd say about close to 40 patients just between me and Mazzur. So mainly oxygen.

Q: Okay, and were you able to maintain radio communication?

A: NO, after the first building collapsed I told them on city-wide "listen something's going on, we're getting outta here". They were like "where's the MERV? where's the Merv?" I said I left it a long time ago. Then when we came back, we couldn't transmit for some reason, I don't know. I guess cause they said the tower had the thing on it. But after that, I would say for about 3 ½ hours we couldn't transmit. We didn't know where anyone was.

Q: Did you enter any of the buildings?

## R. SHORT

A: Did I go in? No, I didn't go in. There was a big pile of rubble, that's about it.

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add, any recollections or EMS people you may have seen that you knew, that you can identify?

A: Lieutenant Remz...

Q: Where did you see him?

A: Up here somewhere...

Q: That's Warren Street between West and...

A: Yeah, and we ran up here. IT was Lieutenant Rems, Lieutenant Santamaria, and they were with the Hotzollah truck.

Q: And where was that truck parked?

A: They were parked on West between Warren and Park Place.

Q: Did they give you any direction?

A: Well, they were treating me at the time, cause in fact, I had an eye infection from it. After that was done, we ran back, seen an ambulance, jump-started the MERV, got the LSU, and then we set up over on this side of Vessey near the water. Then as the day, we were like all around. We were there for like 25 hours, okay.

Q: Anything else?

A: We need respirators like the Fire Department, that's all I have to say.

R. SHORT

Q: Okay, I want to thank you for participating in this interview. The time now is 11:14, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110091

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P LISA DESENA

Interview Date: October 16, 2001



L. DESENA

MONTE FEILER: Today's date is October 16, 2001. The time now is 10:42, and this is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, title, and assigned area.

LISA DESENA: Lisa Desena, paramedic, ALS coordinator, Division 4.

Q: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview in the conference room at Division 4 EMS command center at Queens General Hospital, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Go ahead.

A: Okay, we were in the office when we became aware that the first plane hit. There was some confusion as to where we should go. Whether I was supposed to go on the MERV. What ultimately happened was we received a phone call from Joe Cahill, the Citywide ALS coordinator who instructed me to take a full set of ALS equipment, put it on vehicle 833, and come down to Division One. As I was loading the equipment in, Lieutenant Maggiore stopped me. He wanted to accompany me. There was also another paramedic there, Christopher Lefkidakas. Because I was with Chris, I was able to sign out narcotics with the ALS equipment. Lieutenant Maggiore put his equipment on, and we proceeded to the incident. Do you want to know which route we ended up taking?

Q: Sure.

A: We took the Grand Central Parkway. We went over the Triboro Bridge. We came down the FDR Drive. We briefly stopped at Division One to receive

## L. DESENA

instructions on how to proceed. We continued up the FDR Drive and around the Battery, Battery Park.

Q: Who directed you from Division One?

A: The ALS Coordinator for Division One.

Q: Where did she tell you to go?

A: She gave us a number of locations. She said she didn't really have specific instructions. She basically just told us where the staging areas were. So we proceeded down, we ended up at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. This was just right after, I think the second tower had just fallen, or was falling at the time. We stopped at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. We unloaded all of our equipment. We set up the triage area, and then from there, Lieutenant Maggiore and I went down to Liberty plaza, where we had to set up another triage area. One had been set up, but a lot of the people who were there at the time were missing or had gone to hospitals.

Q: Liberty and what? Do you know the cross street?

A: It was One Liberty Plaza. It was the building right next to the Trade Center. I'm not that familiar...yeah, it was right there. It was on the corner of Church and I guess Liberty.

Q: Okay. From the time that you got your assignment to the time that you got to the fire terminal, if you spoke to anybody was that by a cell phone or by radio?

A: We spoke to Citywide by radio. I can't remember, Lieutenant Maggiore may have also tried by cell phone to get the best route to get to the incident. By the time

## L. DESESNA

they gave us instructions over the Queensboro Bridge we were already right next to the Triboro Bridge. I know there were several academy vehicles, ambulances, behind us. Since we were in a command car, we were able to get through and stop traffic so that the academy ambulances could follow us. They came the same route we came, but once we got on the FDR Drive, I don't know where they ended up. I'm trying to think...I know that they had, I think, all the units go to Manhattan South and all the supervisors stay on Citywide. Then we were on Citywide. Lieutenant Maggiore had that radio on. The only radio I had was the Division radio. I was on the command frequency, 4E. So he really had the radio. Like I said, we went to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, we set up a triage area there, saw a number of supervisors at that time.

Q: EMS Supervisors?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know their names?

A: Chief Basile, Chief McCracken, Lieutenant Cronin, paramedic Louie Cooke was there. Chief Browne was eventually brought in, and his aide Jason Katz. Dr.Cherson, Bruce Medjuck, I know there was more, I just have to think. Then we went over to Liberty Plaza and the only supervisor on the scene, the only person there was Lieutenant Soto. Lieutenant Maggiore and Lieutenant Soto took over command and I tried to go inside and set up that triage area. But there were no FDNY people there except for me.

## L. DESENA

There was a number of units from New Jersey, and a lot of doctors were there. There were no other FDNY units there. I was the only one there.

Q: Do you know what departments were there from New Jersey?

A: Actually no, down at Liberty Plaza was so chaotic that it took a long time just to get any semblance of order. The doctors continually kept trying to run down the street and go in the hole. Every time they thought there was someone down there. There were three different building collapses at that time, so everybody was really running all over the place. I honestly don't know who the Jersey units were. I just know there were no FDNY units down there at the time. I stayed down there till 6 AM the next morning.

Q: Did you treat any patients?

A: We had a number of firemen who came in for exhaustion or dehydration. We did have some minor injuries. We had one person pulled out who had been pinned down for several hours. But he wasn't there long, cause Dr. Gonzalez--- he already had blood, an IV. They were giving him blood. They rushed him went to the hospital.

Q: A civilian?

A: A civilian, yeah.

Q: Where did you get the equipment for the triage?

A: My equipment remained at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, so when I got there, there was equipment there. As time went on, they brought down more stuff. We

## L. DESENA

would tell them we needed oxygen, bandages, fluids, and it would end up getting delivered. At the beginning there wasn't a lot of stuff. I think the doctors brought down some stuff with them. So there was some stuff there. It looked like it had been set up prior to the building collapsing. Then all the people that had staged that, I guess went all different places. So we're stuck there, and there was stretchers set up when I got there. The people who were originally there weren't there.

Q: Did you have the opportunity to enter any of the buildings?

A: Except for Liberty Plaza? That morning? No. I stayed there. I was down at the site several times. But because it was so unstable and buildings kept collapsing at the time and because there were no other officers there, Lieutenant Maggiore asked me to stay there and do triage and transport. Which is what I basically did.

Q: Did they have ambulances there?

A: Yes, mostly either the voluntaries or a couple of the volunteers from Long Island, and an occasional FDNY unit was there. We didn't have any problem with the ambulances. Once we were able to set up a staging area, the ambulances would come in. We'd have about 4 or 5 of them there at a time, and as they left we backed up. But that wasn't a problem.

Q: And that was to transport them to the hospital?

A: Yes.

Q: So who was transporting the patients to the triage area?

A: Either firemen or...

## L. DESENA

Q: This was on foot?

A: Yeah, cause we were that close. We were half a block away from the incident. Yeah, the firemen would bring them. The police officers would bring them. There were some people at the pile, and occasionally they would bring people back. But as I said before, most of the people at that time were FDNY, or uniformed service people who had gotten injured, or needed to recline. Most of the walking wounded people had left the area.

Q: Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to add? Any observations? Any other personnel that you may have seen?

A: No, I don't think so. Anybody else that was down there that'd I've seen was accounted for and working today.

Q: Okay, I would like to thank you on the behalf of the Department for participating in this, the time now is 10:52. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110092

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT ADAM BRYNES

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

A. BRYNES

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time is 1244 hours. This is Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant Adam --

LIEUTENANT BRYNES: Brynes, B-r-y-n-e-s, Shield No. 0109.

MR. RADENBERG: -- assigned to EMS Battalion 57 of the Fire Department, City of New York. We are conducting the interview at EMS Battalion 57 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. I was assigned as conditions 572 on 9-11-01. I received a call from the Brooklyn North dispatcher to switch over to Citywide and respond to Manhattan for a report of a signal 1040.

I responded over the Brooklyn Bridge, came around by City Hall, noticed an ambulance treating approximately five people. At this point Tower 1 was engulfed in flames and heavy smoke condition, and the ambulance turned out to be 10 William, Tour 2. They were treating some soft tissue injuries and some burns and some respiratory distress patients, and their location was in front of City Hall by -- what street is that? Between Park Place and Barclay Street off of Centre Street there.



## A. BRYNES

I was trying to receive additional resources for transport of these patients to the nearest facility. I had difficulties -- I couldn't raise anyone on any of the tactical channels to have any further ambulances deployed to me. So I assisted in treating these patients with 10 William when we heard a loud explosion and noticed Tower No. 2 engulfed in flames.

At that point further attempts to get in touch with Citywide or any operations officer at the MCI were unsuccessful, at which point I remember Tower 1 collapsing. I assisted 10 William in getting everybody in their ambulance and I directed them to transport to the nearest 911 facility.

At that point I continued down Broadway. I reached about Dey Street. I was attempting to get to the command post to assist in this incident when I was engulfed by tremendous amounts of debris and smoke and dust, making any further travel impossible.

During this time I had numerous people banging on my command car for help. I decided that, in the best interests of my personal safety, that I would egress from that location. Prior to doing so, I exited my vehicle and grabbed as many people as I could into

## A. BRYNES

my command car and then I proceeded to turn around and I drove from the location with approximately six people in my command car that were all suffering from severe trauma. I advised the Citywide dispatcher that I needed a place to transport the personnel. The dispatcher did not know if any of the treatment areas still existed, so at that point I concluded that the nearest place I could get to was Beth Israel Hospital, and I started transporting those six individuals to the hospital.

At that point I noticed another command car, a Fire command car, behind me, trying to get through the traffic, and that command car followed me up until about 14th Street and Park Avenue, at which point that command car died. I went up to the command car and found Lieutenant Monroe, who was suffering from acute stress regarding this incident, like all of us. She had about five people in her command car that were suffering from trauma and associated injuries from this event.

I got back on the Citywide frequency and requested two ambulances to my location to take care of all these people, but after a few minutes I realized that the likelihood of receiving an ambulance at that

## A. BRYNES

time was not going to be expeditious, and in an effort to provide the best care I could to these approximate eight to ten people, I decided to take Lieutenant Monroe and all of the people in her command car in my command car, where I transported everyone to Beth Israel Hospital. After getting everyone into the hospital, I land lined Citywide advising them that I had brought Lieutenant Monroe into the hospital and about eight civilians and requested further instruction.

At that point I was directed to respond to -- what they had at that time was a Battery Park command center. I traveled across town from Beth Israel down to the West Side Highway. En route down the West Side Highway, I noticed a group of EMS personnel and ambulances and a Chief and I mistakenly took that to be the command center. When I approached the Chief, whose name I cannot recall at this time, he told me that he would need my assistance gathering the personnel to set up a staging area.

I assisted in that for about 20 minutes, when I heard reports of a massive gas leak and there was a massive evacuation. I saw numerous people in vehicles driving north up the West Side Highway to evacuate the

## A. BRYNES

immediate area. I was told that there was a massive gas leak and that we needed to evacuate. So we evacuated all personnel to Chelsea Piers, where a new staging area was set up. I assisted in logistics at that staging area, at which point I met up with Chief Kowalczyk, who requested that I transport him down to the command center that was established on West Street and Chambers Street at that time.

I responded down to West Street and Chambers Street with Chief Kowalczyk and his aide. I was given direction at that point to become a staging officer for all extra resource personnel that were sent in, and we established a treatment command center at Stuyvesant High School auditorium, at which point, sometime later, I was directed then to become the transport officer for the operation, where I responded to, again, West Street and Chambers.

I assumed transport operations for some period of time, several hours. Then I was directed to the command post, where I became the recording officer for Chief Kowalczyk and Chief McCracken, until about 2000 hours, at which point I was relieved and I retrieved my command car and responded back to Battalion 57, where I signed out at 2100 hours on

A. BRYNES

09-11-01.

That basically is my recollection of my operations on that date and time.

Q. The people that you had in your car and that Lieutenant Monroe had in her car, as far as you know, they were all civilians?

A. Yes. As far as I knew, they were all civilians. I didn't see anyone in any uniform and no one at that time identified themselves as being a uniformed member of any service.

Q. When you came down from Beth Israel, you said you were coming down the West Side Highway?

A. Correct.

Q. Do you remember how far, about how close you got to the incident when you came across the Chief and --

A. I believe that I stopped somewhere maybe 20 blocks south of Chelsea Piers. If they were named streets, I didn't see a name on them. But it was about 15 blocks south of the Chelsea Piers, about 15 blocks south of that.

Q. What is Lieutenant Monroe's first name?

A. Amy Monroe.

Q. Do you know what battalion she's at?

A. BRYNES

A. She is Chief McCracken's aide.

Q. Do you remember the collapse of the second tower?

A. No. All I remember is that I found out about the collapse of the second tower when I got to Beth Israel Hospital.

Q. So immediately after the collapses, the collapse of the second tower, you didn't actually make it down to the Trade Center complex?

A. During the collapse of the second tower?

Q. Yes.

A. No.

Q. In that period?

A. No. Because I got stopped, you know, I was coming down West Side Highway and I got stopped there before I got down any further. By the time I got back to the command center with Chief Kowalczyk, No. 2 building had collapsed. There were massive fires everywhere, so we weren't allowed to go south of Chambers Street at that time.

I do remember seeing the collapse of 6 World Trade Center. Was it 6 or -- I think it was 6. Did 6 drop? It was one of them, 6 or 3 or 7. I just remember watching the collapse of another building at

A. BRYNES

that time and that got us pretty nervous because there was, again, a big smoke-like cloud coming towards us and I just remember everyone at the command center running for cover until after that blew over. But that's the only other building I saw collapse. I think it was No. 6. I think, I'm not sure, but I think it was No. 6. Somebody told me it was No. 6 that had collapsed.

That's the best I can remember it. It was without a doubt a very hectic and totally uncontrolled environment. But that's what I can recollect.

Q. When you first got into Manhattan, you met up with 10 Willie?

A. Correct.

Q. Are they a Fire unit or voluntary?

A. They're a private, voluntary unit.

Q. Do you remember what hospital they're from?

A. I'd like to say New York Hospital, but I can't be sure.

Q. Okay.

A. Tony Brooks was one of the paramedics. I remember him because I used to work with him as a medic before he left EMS.

Q. From the time that you were with 10 Willie

A. BRYNES

until you started to transport up to Beth Israel and found that Lieutenant Monroe was behind you, did you see any other Department personnel?

A. No, not that I can recall.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments that you'd like to add?

A. No. I'd just be interested in going over the post-MCI critique about the incident. I've had some concerns regarding communication ability during something like this. I felt that something can be done in the future to allow us a better communication capability when something this big happens. I'm not saying that anything necessarily failed in this case, but I think that something could definitely be improved on to probably help our ability to perform our job.

That's about it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1301 hours and the interview is concluded.



File No. 9110093

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MICHAEL OBER

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

## M. OBER

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 16, 2001. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, rank, assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

MICHAEL OBER: My name is Michael Ober, I am an EMT with the New York City Fire Department. I am currently assigned to Division 3 in Brooklyn.

Q: Mike, were you working on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the day of the World Trade Center disaster?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: And were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: In your own words, can you please tell me about the events of that day?

A: Um, the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>, I was in the office, I am currently assigned to Chief Kowalcyk. He was up here in the office, and he called down to me, "get the car ready". I said why? He said a plane crashed into the Twin Towers. I didn't really believe him at first. Then on the way out the door, one of the people who works here turned the TV on and we could see the towers burning. I said all right. I didn't think it was going to be so massive. I thought it was a Cessna or something like that. I had no idea it was going to be a 767. So I ran downstairs, got the car ready, we started to leave. I don't

## M. OBER

know what road we were on, but I could see a nice picture of the city skyline. You saw the towers right in front of you, and the first tower was hit. I couldn't tell at first if it was papers or birds, but something white was you know, like flickering up in the sky. It just seemed weird. But anyway, we got into Manhattan. The Chief was trying to prepare us for everything. He said, "you know, just get ready, this may be a bad day. You might see a lot of dead people. You might see a lot of bad things". He was also saying that, just be prepared, cause it might be a terrorist act. At this point we still had no idea what was going on. We just heard that a plane hit the Twin Towers. He said, "be ready for secondary explosives". Just, you know, stuff like that, just trying to give me an idea of what he wants me to do when we get down there. We got out of the tunnel. Do you want this to be really descriptive, or do you just want to know...?

Q: Absolutely, sure, as descriptive as possible.

A: We were coming down what I believe is West Street, and the Chief says, what is that in the road up there? We just saw a pile sitting there, had no idea what it was. But we came closer, and found out it was body parts. We turned back the car, I have no idea exactly where, to be honest, I can't remember the street. We started walking to the building, I believe the building we walked into was the South Tower, I'm just not sure. But it was where the fire command post was, whichever building the fire command post was in, that's where we went. We walked into there, on the way into the building, there was people running around, people that was jumping landing on the grounds. Whatever building we walked into there was a glass canopy, foyer type thing

## M. OBER

where from the street you can see into the building. As we were walking into the building, we just heard a huge bang. As we looked up, it was someone who had jumped, god knows how far up. We got into the lobby of the building and it was like chaos, there were people everywhere. Once we got in there, I don't remember exactly who it was, I think it was one of the fire Chiefs who said "you know it's not safe, we gotta get outside". So we left to go outside, and as we stepped out of the building, it was like, raining people. People were just jumping from everywhere. Just all over it was bodies and parts just scattered. We walked across, I believe it was West Street, and we set up the command post over there next to the fire command post, just trying to get everything in order. At the same time we're trying to watch to see what's going on. The only thing that was going on was you could see the buildings burning and people just jumping. You could watch them fall from like the 90<sup>th</sup> floor all the way down. It's like you go to school for so long to be able to take care of people and treat them and be able to fix them when there's something wrong with them, and there's nothing, they hit the ground, and that's it. I saw one guy got split in half by a light post, his torso and his legs weren't together. You just feel helpless, there's nothing you can do. So we're sitting there trying to set up the command board. I really don't know how long we're there for, to be honest, I have no idea. Then we heard a rumble, some twisting metal, we looked up in the air, and to be totally honest, at first, I don't know exactly...but it looked to me just like an explosion. It didn't look like the building was coming down, it looked like just one floor had blown completely outside of it. I was sitting there looking at it. I just never thought they would

## M. OBER

ever come down, so I didn't think they were coming down. I just froze and stood there looking at it. Then I saw everybody running past me and I said, I better start running. I turned around, luckily there's a parking garage behind us. We ran into the parking garage, and right before I got into the parking garage, I turned around and I could see the debris starting to come down.

Q: When you say we were running, can you tell me who else was in this group that was running?

A: Well, the command post was set up, I believe it was right on the sidewalk directly across the street, and directly behind us was like a driveway into a parking garage. The command post in front was myself, Chief Kowalczyk. There was either a Lieutenant or a Captain from Manhattan, one of the EMS officers. Then it was either directly to our left, or just a little behind us was the fire command post. Chief Ganci was there, Commissioner Feehan, all the guys who didn't make it out were standing right over there.

Q: How far from you were they?

A: Five, ten feet max. Then behind us, there was just lots of firefighters, I can't even begin to tell you how many. There was some cops back there, a lot of firefighters. They had all their gear sitting there, I guess they were just waiting for orders, just sitting there. After hearing this and looking up and seeing the building, what I thought was an explosion, everyone was running, I turned around and decided that I should probably take off like everybody else. So when I got to the entrance, I turned

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around and saw the debris coming down. I didn't know if I was gonna die or get trapped. I was just like, I kept thinking, I don't want to be alone. I need to find somebody. I went into the parking garage, I made it about 5 feet. I saw some firefighter up against the wall, he was on the ground right close to the wall. I just jumped on this guy's back, I had no idea who he was. I said, are you all right? He was just like, yeah buddy, are you all right? Yeah, I'm fine. Just as he said that, a huge gust of wind just started coming down. It wasn't like huge chunks of debris, but it was a lot of dust, you know, just dust, it might have been ash too. But it was pitch black. We just layed there till it stopped coming down, then we finally got back up, it probably had to be inches of just stuff on top of everything. It had to be probably like six inches of dust and all kinds of stuff. After it stopped coming down, I finally got up, and thought we gotta get outta here. We got up. We're trying to figure out where we were. It seemed like a movie, it was just like guys in fire companies were screaming out their company numbers. I think it was 16, I'm not sure. But I remember just hearing someone in the background screaming 16, where are you? It didn't seem-- I just felt like I was in a movie. So myself and this firefighter, I have no idea who it is, decide that we're gonna walk towards this entrance where we came in. We walked, and I'm like, we're stuck. He said, no we're not at the entrance yet. Somebody says no, you're outside. I'm like we're not outside, it's dark out. He said look at the air, there's so much stuff in the air, no sunlight's getting through. The amount of stuff that was in the air, you couldn't see it. It was like a curtain of just dust that blocked out all the sunlight. Breathing was horrible, it was just ash and dust. Every time

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I took a breath, I could feel more of it going into me. You try covering up your mouth, but it was still getting in. Cause it was just so thick in the air, it was hard to see 10 feet by you. It was horrible. There was just gear everywhere. I had no idea where I was, I had no idea how I was getting out. I somehow stumbled over a Scoot Pack and picked it up, just in case. I never used it, but I just picked it up and brought it just in case I needed to use it. We found out we were outside. At first you really couldn't see anything, it was just dark. Then after that, we were just looking for people, anything around us that we would know, that could get us out. Someone that could help, it was just confusion at first. I didn't know what to do, where to go, who to help, who to look for or anything. Then the air started to settle down a little bit, and some of the air was coming through, and it felt like I was looking at a black and white TV. Everything was a shade of gray. Everybody around me was just covered in gray. I saw a fire engine that was just completely destroyed, and it was just gray. Every fire engine was just a different shade of gray. It was just crazy. Actually, with all the devastation that was going on, that was the real cool thing to see. I don't know why, it was just really interesting. It was just like I said, it was like a black and white TV.

Q: At this point, did you know where your partner Chief Kowalcyk was?

A: No. I had no idea.

Q: The last time you saw him was at the command post?

A: Once I finally got situated, and got a hold of myself, I realized what was going on. I started looking for him. After a couple minutes of looking for him, another

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Chief's aide, who I don't know his name, I know his face, he came over to me and said where's your Chief? I had no idea. He's said where's your Chief? I said I don't know. We started walking around looking for him. I don't even know how long we looked for him, time was just a big blur. We didn't find him anywhere, we went back into the parking garage, we couldn't find him in the parking garage. We walked down to the corner and both of our Chiefs were standing there together. We started heading down the block to get to the Chiefs.

Q: Who was the other Chief who was with Chief Kowalcyk, do you know?

A: I'm not sure...sorry. I can't remember.

Q: No, no, it's alright.

A: Just as we got to the Chiefs, the rumbling started again, and it was just like a sound I'll never forget. Days afterwards I heard a rumbling noise and I was hiding. You knew what was happening, we turned around and the second building was coming down. So we took off running again, and I don't know what building it was, sorry I don't really know the area very well...

Q: It's fine, it's fine.

A: I just found a safe area, so I didn't care what street it was. We ran behind this building, and had shelter in that building. People were just coming in. They let people in the doors. Then from there, for a while I don't know what happened. I know we left the building, we found an ambulance crew and we told the driver that we had to set up some kind of staging. Set up some kind of triage, we had to get some kind of



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order. We figured the best way to do that was to take a step back. So Chief Kowalczyk said take them down to Chelsea Piers. He figured it was a big area, they had a lot of big open rooms in there. If need be we could make it into a make-shift hospital, or a triage area. We took a ride down there. I don't even remember how long we were down there for. I just remember flying through the streets of Manhattan, going down there. When we got down there, it was just like, go down to the end, there was a little cobblestone driveway. It was maybe like 2 cars wide, maybe a little bit bigger than that. Then there's like a main road, you just go to the end of the driveway. He just told me to switch any ambulance that shows up over to the command frequency. Keep the driver in the car, tell them don't leave the ambulance. He just had a lot of orders. Write down the unit number. I went down to the end and the ambulances just started showing up from everywhere. Ambulance companies that I had never even heard of before. People just from everywhere were showing up. There had to be hundreds of ambulances lined up there. I had ambulances show up, and all I had to do was write down what kind of crew they were, whether it was a BLS crew, an ALS crew. Whether they had you know, two people or ten. The ambulances would show up and I'm like well, what's your crew? They'd be like, well it's myself, my partner, we're both EMTs. I have five doctors, and four nurses in the back. There was so many people. So many people with so much training and so much knowledge. These amazing skills that they could treat these people with, but there was no patients. We had all kind of medically trained people there and nobody to take care of. We had ambulances just lined up, and everybody's getting

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frustrated cause they know what's going on. It's like everybody who came out here who had bumps and bruises. Or they didn't come out, they were dead. There was really nothing that anyone could do down there, so they were getting frustrated. Then I just, I don't even know...time was just a blur, I don't remember what time it was. There was a rumor about a gas leak going on down there, and about 2 minutes after this rumor of the gas leak, Chief Kowalczyk calls me on the radio and says we're going back down there. I remember getting down there, that's about it. I don't remember exactly what we did once we got down there. It was weird, it was probably the most devastating thing I've ever seen in my life, and so much of it I can't remember. I don't remember where I parked the car, you know, I don't remember the people that I saw. I saw so many people, and it's like, a lot of them I know by face, and I will never forget faces. But I don't know names. Both people that I work with, and both victims that I saw parts from were like, someone's face that I saw them jump, and they landed 5 feet from me. I don't remember the sound of the building hitting the ground. Somebody told me that it was measured on the Richter scale, I don't know how true that is. If the building is hitting the ground that hard, how do I not remember the sound of it? The smell was just --- it has a distinct smell. I've been to Manhattan many times since then, and that smell just brings back every single...I don't know if it's like World Trade Center cement. I don't know what exactly it is. It's just that like, the smell that we inhaled so many times with the rest of the dust and everything in the parking garage. It's just a nasty smell. I mean, it's not that bad, but I

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just don't like the smell. Um, I don't know...we were down there, there was rumors about the other stuff going on. But nobody had definite information.

Q: About what other stuff?

A: One rumor I heard was that they were taking out the tunnels, which seemed pretty damn scary considering we took the tunnel on the way over here.

Q: The Brooklyn Battery Tunnel?

A: The Brooklyn Battery, there you go. The Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Then we heard about the Pentagon. Somebody also said the Sear's Tower was hit. That's about it as far as I know. People were just talking. You didn't know what was true and what was not true, you know? I remember standing on, I think it was on West Street, and it was the first plane I had heard in awhile. I started flipping out. I turned around and I'm looking at the Empire State Building, and I'm like, it's gone. All I heard was the rumbling of an airplane, and I'm like, they're taking out the Empire State Building too. It was some kind of F-15 or something came like, screaming over our heads. That was the greatest thing I saw all day long. I'm like, they're not hitting us with anymore planes. It's just like I said, a lot of the stuff I'll be getting here and there. It's all bits and pieces.

Q: Is there anything else that you feel you want to add to this interview?

Anything at all?

A: Sure, I probably should have said, or told you about. I know this is just a personal feeling, but the amount of devastation that was going on down there, it's just unbelievable the number of people who came out. When I was down at Chelsea Piers

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lining up the ambulances, I had people coming up to me who wanted to just do something. Someone was like, I'm a retired Vietnam veteran. I can help you know. I'm, used to this kind of situation. What can I do to help? There were people everywhere, "I'm a lawyer", and you see them out there directing traffic. They tried so much to bring us down, whoever did this. It's just not gonna happen, you know? It's just so many awesome people out there. Just the way everybody's doing the job, it's unbelievable. This city, I'm proud of where I work.

Q: You should be. You have good reason to be proud. Well Mike, I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 11:02. The counter on the cassette player is 313.

File No. 9110094

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P ERIC RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

## E. RODRIGUEZ

MIKE TAMBASCO: Today is October 16, my name is Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview into the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> at the World Trade Center. The interview today is with paramedic Eric Rodriguez, who is assigned to Unit 35 Zebra, tour 2. We are in the Battalion 57 locker room. Alright, Eric.

ERIC RODRIGUEZ: My name is Eric Rodriguez, I'm a paramedic assigned to 35 Zebra 2. On the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, my partner and I, Joel Pierce went over to Carl's Place, a little deli over on Union and North 8<sup>th</sup> where we get our breakfast every morning, cause it's right around our 89, and it's really relaxing. As we were sitting down eating, all of a sudden we heard a lot of Brooklyn units getting switched to Citywide. A lot of 31 Units down by the Brooklyn Bridge. So we looked at each other and said wow, something must be going on, let's see if we can, you know, something good to buff. So we switched over to citywide and we started hearing all these reports about we have fire showing at the World Trade Center, explosion. So we go woah, so we drove over to Kent Avenue and as we got around Kent and North 6<sup>th</sup>, we could see that the North Tower had been struck. I didn't know what it was. I mean, the plumes of smoke were coming, and I remember getting on the phone and calling my wife and my mother saying turn on the television. There's a hole in the World Trade Center. So now at this point, my partner is calling Citywide, telling them we're an ALS haz-tac,

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we can be over the bridge in 5 minutes. You know, put us on the job. Cause at this point we had also heard the MCI code for an airplane crash. So we're thinking haz-tac, we can get there and really get in on the job. We couldn't get out on the phones and we're trying to get through on the radio, but not stepping on anybody. As we're standing there watching the buildings is when the second plane hit. It was then that we realized that this was not just a fire. That whole feeling just like, your stomach dropped out. At that point, we got on the radio and said 35 Zebra, we're going. We had our Sargent from the 90 Precinct, was down there. He had already got --cleared traffic for us straight down Broadway to the Willie B. I remember going across the Willamsburg Bridge, I looked at my partner and said brother, no matter what happens, we go home alive tonight. Cause even then we were thinking there's got to be very heavy patient care. But who else knows what's going on. When we first got into Manhattan over the Willie B, we got directed over to Canal down to Broadway. We were coming down Broadway past City Hall, and it was pandemonium. There was all kind of resources over here, we're trying to look for some kind of EMS command post. There were crowds of people over here, we wound up coming down, coming across over here. There was wreckage everywhere, and there were body parts.

Q: So you came across West on Vessey Street?

A: Yeah, and there was nothing but, it was absolutely like Berlin 1944, 45. We couldn't get across over here because there was too much debris, it didn't look too safe. We didn't see too much trucks or apparatus. So we came down here.

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Q: You came down Church Street going south.

A: Then we had to divert back over this way, cause we couldn't, there was too much debris. You know the stairs that's over here, across from the hotel that's usually over here?

Q: Right, right.

A: There was far too much stuff here, and there were body parts in the street. We didn't want to run over them, so I came back across over here on this little street, I guess that's Dey.

Q: Dey Street, you went over east, right?

A: We got back to Broadway, then we started, we lit it up again and went all the way down Broadway.

Q: Southbound on Broadway, right.

A: We started picking up all these ambulances. They just started jumping in line behind us. We came down across by the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and got over to West Street, and just headed back up.

Q: Right, up north.

A: Up north. Now at Liberty, we saw a command vehicle with an EMS officer standing at Liberty and West Street. So we figured that's where it was. I was listening to the radio, I was hearing Chief Goldfarb on the radio. I know his incident command is second to none. So I figured that's where he was, and I pretty much trust a



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lot of his decisions. Okay, we're here, we're haz-tac, what do you want us to do? Well, it turns out he wasn't there. But there was a captain, I forget who he was, but he was newly promoted, a kind of heavysset guy.

Q: Captain D'amato maybe?

A: Maybe. We're like, where do you want us? He said, give me a second, I just got here, this isn't a command post as far as I know. But at this point we're standing there talking to him and other busses are going around us and starting to line up behind his command vehicle. It also looked like PD was setting up a command post right there, they had a lot of units in plainclothes. Apparatus were still showing up, so we initially started staging right underneath that little walkway that goes across...

Q: That goes across West Street?

A: No, Liberty. This one right here.

Q: Got you.

A: That's when we started noticing that people were jumping on that side. At first I said look out, there's debris falling. We looked up and said no, that's not debris, those are bodies. We're thinking bodies from the fire floors. Then we started seeing they were screaming and they were moving, and we were watching them hit the ground. At that point there's nothing you can do to treat them. You know we might need to move back cause they're gonna start taking some of us out. So we moved back here where South End and Liberty meet.

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Q: West, where South End, right.

A: We started staging over here, they wanted us down on South End. They told us listen, you guys are haz-tac. We have about 2 or 3 of your haz-tac units here. What we want to do is, we want you to stay up close here because we're gonna consolidate you guys, you're gonna Scott up, you're gonna go up and do searches.

Q: Do you remember who told you that? Was it an EMS captain?

A: There was a captain. No, there wasn't cause I had to tell the captain. Who was it? It was a chief said it, I don't remember what chief was there.

Q: Okay, fine.

A: Cause it wasn't Chief Goldfarb, cause I know his aide. It was someone I didn't know. It might have been Chief Wells, I'm really not sure.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause at this point I hadn't actually physically seen any of the chiefs, but I was hearing them on the radio. I was hearing Brynes on the radio, so I was trying to get a sense of where everybody was. I knew there was a command center inside, there was a forward triage. I was thinking I don't see too many medics here, I see a lot of EMTs. So me and my partner are like we gotta get in, at least maybe we can do something over there. So we're standing there, and we're hearing the reports, patients with major burns and all that. My partner says listen, I want to go find out what's going on. So he starts walking over towards West Street and Liberty and South. I was on the corner of Liberty

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and South End Street. I went into the back of the truck and started hanging trauma lines. I figured if we get a burn victim or whatever, we're prepared. I don't know how much time went by. I know I slipped out of the truck for a minute and then Chief McCracken was there, and I think it was Chief Grant was there. I remember Chief McCracken saying chief Grant is taking over, he's assuming command of this sector right here. Anybody needs directions, I want all the drivers to stay with the vehicles and everybody else to come over by Chief Grant. Well my partner was already over there, and I was driving that day. So I figured well, I'll finish hanging all the trauma lines. I was in back of the vehicle and I heard, it sounded like I thought another plane had struck the building. This loud bang and then it sounded like a locomotive, or like when I used to live in Howard Beach, when the planes used to come in at night, flying right over the house. Everything started shaking and I heard like a thunderstorm. Somebody screamed it's coming down. I don't remember if it was on the radio, because the side door of the bus was open. The back door of the truck--I could see out of. I looked, and I bent all the way down to look up as far as I could, and I could see the cloud coming. I thought the building was actually falling over. I didn't know it was pan-caking. I was like, I'm not getting out of here. So I dove on the floor of the truck. I was praying, if something hits this bus, don't let it collapse the box. If it does, I hope there's a big enough void that I'll be alright. I remember something hit the bus hard enough that my siren went off. Then the siren died.

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So the siren went off and then it died. It was pitch black, and I heard the May Days come across. I couldn't breathe, you know.

Q: Can you remember anyone specific you heard on the May Days?

A: No, I just heard someone say May Day, May Day. We are pinned, we are pinned, like that. People stepping on each other. I remember hearing Central say units, calm down, you know-- of that nature. I was suffocating and then I realized that...and then I remembered that we had Scott packs. There was a piece of metal that was like, wedged in the doorway. I grabbed my mask, I was able to get the metal out of the way, and the soot and stuff was about halfway up the side of the bus. So I was able to dig through that, get to the compartment, and get my Scott pack on. I thought I was actually under a debris or something, and I'm thinking whatever's on top of me I hope isn't a fire part. Cause I don't want this to just collapse and then you know, fry and all that. As it started to filter down, I'm thinking, where the hell is my partner? There was a Lincoln Navigator that was right next to the bus, that when I went to step in, I had to move the door cause it wouldn't open all the way. It was gone, I mean it wasn't...it was gone. There were a couple of ambulances that were completely totaled. You know the Hottzollah MERV that they had up there was completely flat. As it was clearing up, I could see more and more of the apparatus that were there completely destroyed or gone. Then I don't remember seeing anybody move, it was dead silent and it was like being on the surface of the moon. Cause all I could hear was the Scott pack, you know? So I'm looking, I'm looking and I ran into Timmy Keller, from Batallion Fifty.

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He was kind of standing up, he looked a little dazed and I said Timmy, are you alright? And he goes, I can't find Karen, Karen DeShore. I said, where was she? She was right next to me before everything happened. He said, I jumped under the car, I can't find her. I said, well have you seen anyone else? He said no. So now I'm still looking for my partner. I finally found Joel, he was having a hard time breathing. I said, lets go get your Scott pack and get out of here. He says no, we got to go back to the first tower and start digging. I said listen, if this one came down, the other one's probably gonna come down. Trust me, turn around, get on my ass, we'll get out of the area. If they say it's not gonna come down, we'll come back. Until such time, we need to get out of here. When we got back to the truck, he got his Scott pack on. The vehicle was dead, it wouldn't move, I think one of my rear axles was busted too. The vehicle was dead. We started hearing on the radio, all units within the vicinity of the World Trade Center, you need to evacuate the immediate area because the North Tower is beginning to lean. So, we started hoofing it, and we found another crew was there. They had no stretcher in their bus. There was this paramedic, and I know I've seen him, but I can't remember if I've seen him in Manhattan or from when I worked in the Bronx.

Q: One of our units?

A: One of our guys. I said, does that truck run? He said absolutely, everybody get on. So we jumped in the back right as the North Tower collapsed.

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South End is not a very big street, but he was flying down that street and that cloud was coming. It looked like we were parked. We got to the end of South End Street, by that building over there, and they had all those boats, they were trying to get people on them. That's when the second cloud came. I got separated from my partner at that time again, so while we were standing there, I'll never forget it. It seemed to be just completely disorganized, and people were like, let's just help these people to the boats and all that. The paramedic who was driving that rig turned around and said listen, get a pen and a paper, we need to start writing down who's here. I'm assuming command of this area. We started doing that, and I told him, I'm gonna go find my partner. He was like, I wish you'd stay here, and I was like, well, no. I finally found him. We made our way down to South Ferry, and we met Chief McCracken. Then we wound up going over to Liberty Street. Not Liberty Street, Joel went back to Liberty Street, I stayed down in South Ferry. Where I met him, he was on the north side of everything when it happened.

Q: Anything else you want to add to it, Eric?

A: Nothing else. That's about it.

Q: Thank you. This interview concludes at 13:13. By the way, it began at 12:58.

File No. 9110095

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF WALTER KOWALCZYK

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 16th. My name is Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. The time is 10:47 a.m. I am in the office of Chief Walter Kowalczyk in the Battalion 58 building. We will be doing an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center.

Q. Chief, if you would just be good enough to tell me in your own words what happened.

A. On the morning of the 11th, I started my tour of duty at approximately 5:30 in the morning. I was in my division office. I was also scheduled to be, for the date of the 11th, the citywide EMS chief. What that means is that for the 24-hour period starting at 8 a.m. on the 11th and terminating at 8 a.m. on the 12th, I am the ranking EMS officer responsible for EMS activities.

I was sitting in my office doing my work. I always monitor the fire scanner as well as the EMS dispatch frequencies. At which point a second alarm came over on the Brooklyn fire frequency. Brooklyn fire transmitted a second



alarm for the World Trade Center. I immediately turned the fire scanner to the Manhattan frequency, and there was a report of a plane into the Trade Center.

At that point I advised my staffer to get an overview of division operations. I'm responsible on a day-to-day basis for EMS Division 3, which is approximately 700 people and about 65 ambulances at peak shift.

As I was preparing to leave, there was a TV on in the other room that had a live shot of this. I realized going out that this is probably something fairly major. However, in my mind I thought it was probably a small plane into the Trade Center.

My aide Michael Ober and myself responded to the Trade Center. The best access route that we took was the Prospect Expressway into the Gowanus. As we approached on the Gowanus, the enormity of the situation was live in front of us. And there was not much we could do because we were facing some heavy traffic.

I remember turning to my aide and saying we need to use caution going into this,

looking at the enormity of the situation. From a safety perspective I was also concerned that this could be terrorism. I have taken a good number of courses in preparation for the medical aspects of bioterrorism.

We were stuck in traffic for a little bit, and then traffic started to move. It appeared that the Police Department had very quickly put some traffic patterns into place to pull emergency traffic through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

As soon as we came through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, the devastation was almost immediate. In my career I have managed many multiple-casualty incidents from plane crashes to severe train derailments, so managing high-scale incidents never scared me.

However, as you're driving down West Street and you have to maneuver the vehicle to avoid driving over what appeared to be body parts as well as debris, my mouth went dry. I had the sensation that I had a job to do. I had to ensure the safety of the EMS work force. But how do I do this if I can't talk?

I asked somebody for a -- so we parked our car and came down West Street. There was no clearly defined staging area at that point in time. It was a fairly chaotic event. And at that point the only thing that was evident was fire from at least one of the towers.

We positioned our vehicle on Liberty Street between West Street and North End. I pulled my safety gear out and my portable radio and we took a command board. That was the last time I was to see my vehicle in an upright position.

We proceeded north on West Street, trying to find the command post. In most incidences to find the command post is very clear and evident. However, at this point in time it was not clear and evident. We found some officials to say that the command post was in the lobby of One World Trade Center, which is the north tower.

Q. The north tower.

A. I think the most devastating or one of the most devastating views I had was as we were entering Two World Trade Center there was a torso

on the ground. It looked to me a little like a CPR mannequin. But I had to focus to keep going.

Debris was coming down around us. We entered Two World Trade Center through a shattered window. We found Chief Gombo, who was the ranking EMS officer on the scene. I remember seeing Chief Peter Hayden from the Fire Department there.

At that point they indicated we needed to move the command post. There was a report of another plane coming. In retrospect, knowing the events that had occurred, I'm not sure if that was the second plane that was coming or the second plane had already come and now intelligence was starting to develop and maybe there was a third plane inbound.

We moved quickly but cautiously outside and started to establish a command post in the driveway in front of Two World Financial Center, which is on West Street, basically midpoint between the intersections of Vesey and Liberty Street.

At that point a formal command post of fire officials started to develop, including

First Deputy Commissioner Feehan and Chief of Department Peter Ganci. I think Chief Ray Downey was there. Chief Gombo came over.

Basically I started to assume the responsibility of the EMS operations chief. I started to, in the midst of the chaos, establish some type of infrastructure for the EMS operations. I remember deploying chiefs and officers to Vesey and West and to Liberty and West with global direction of trying to set up operation there.

It was very difficult to concentrate, given the enormity of the situation. Probably the most emotional piece was when we saw the bodies coming off the Trade Center. Now, I'm not talking about one or two bodies. We had to have watched between 10 and 20 bodies come down. I will never forget the sound of those bodies hitting the ground.

I believe it's the front of One World Trade Center, it's structured in a manner that has a glass canopy over the driveway. Again, my recollection could be wrong. It could be either that or Three World Trade Center. It was one of

the buildings on West Street. I believe it was One World Trade Center.

The bodies were coming down and going through those plate glasses. The sound -- if you ever heard sounds of plywood dropping on the ground, just that force, it was multiplied. I thought I was at an event at Universal Studios, on the side, watching a movie being taped. But this was no movie. It was real life, and it was moving in slow motion.

There were some thoughts or words of people that you just can't forget. I'm sure it wasn't the last words that Chief Ganci said, but I remember words such as "oh, shit, those bastards." That's the last words I ever heard Chief Ganci say.

We were trying to get a handle on running the EMS operation when suddenly what appeared to be in slow motion was a humongous black cloud starting to descend from the sky. That black cloud was, later I realized, the collapsing of I believe the north tower. In retrospect, it happened in slow motion, but yet it happened so quickly. I don't remember which

one it was.

We turned, and we ran down this driveway. As I'm running down this driveway, I probably said why am I doing this? Why am I running down a driveway into a parking garage that would be a natural flow for debris? Again, in my mind I had been to building collapses, and building collapses usually come down at an angle.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] two fantastic children. As I was

running, I wasn't sure if I would ever see them again.

We ran into this garage along with Chief Gombo, Lieutenant Terranova and members of the Police Department and firefighting operations. I believe Commissioner Fitzpatrick was with us along with emergency service officers. I thought we were going to die.

A haze was starting to develop. We could not see the driveway. That was black. I wasn't sure if the haze that was developing was a smoke condition starting to impact us or the debris.

I heard a fire officer scream: 18, where are you? It was either 18 or 16 -- 18 or 16 Truck, where are you? It seemed like a scene from Backdraft where they're trying to recall their members. But this was no movie; this was live.

Then we were all scared. There was probably 15, 20, 30 people with us in the garage. Chief Gombo was coughing, and I was concerned about him. We were all covered with soot. I wasn't sure if I was going to get out. Nobody could find an exit, nobody.

I didn't know what would happen then. I kept hearing the sound of -- I guess it's the sounds of silence. But it wasn't silence; it was a cloud just coming down on us.

We regrouped. People were trying to get out on cell phones or radios to no avail. There was a phone there. I'm not sure if anybody ever got out on the phone. I'm not sure if we knew where we were, except across the street from the Trade Center. That really doesn't narrow it down in New York City.

Somebody found an exit. I'm not sure



how long we were there for. We came out, I would probably say at the south side of Two World Financial Center. People said that it was near the area of the Winter Garden. It looked like a snowstorm, covered with white, and quiet, ever so quiet.

The other scary thing -- to go back for a second -- I couldn't find my aide. My aide is a young man who happens to live in my neighborhood. I couldn't find him. For that moment, while I was trapped, I knew I was breathing and alive. I didn't know where he was.

As we got out, we looked around, and people were devastated and just did not know where to go. What was weird is behind Two World Financial Center there's like a little cove. On the map it's indicated as the North Cove Yacht and Harbor. And I knew water was there because I had done planning in the past for the Statue of Liberty celebrations. You couldn't see the water.

We regrouped, found Chief Goldfarb, Chief Villani and Chief Gombo. Probably the happiest moment of that day was when I saw my

aide Michael. He said he came into the garage. I didn't see him. So I'm not sure if he even did. Once we were in the garage, there was a separation between the front and the back from debris.

We went into another building, which I think was Three World Financial Center, or it might have been Four World Financial Center, one of the other buildings to the north, to try to strategize. We had discussions that we needed to reorganize and move north. We did not know what the issues were at that point in time.

So people spoke about setting up staging areas on Chambers Street. I recommended that we go further north, just to stabilize. We later decided to move up to 23rd Street, to Chelsea Piers. I've commanded many operations. I'm a very aggressive, on-scene commander with the safety of the people that work with us first. But at that point in time I think I got selfish and I aggressively volunteered for the 23rd Street operation.

I had fears I would never see my kids again. And I had an opportunity of life again.

I found an ambulance crew. My aide and myself got into this ambulance, and it was like a slalom course, driving through debris.

At that point the man-made snow of the World Trade Center was fairly deep. Somehow the operator of the vehicle -- to this day I don't know who it was -- got us up to 23rd Street.

I met with representatives of Chelsea Piers. I asked for their assistance. They overwhelmingly welcomed us, whatever you need. That location would later be a very beneficial strategy point for days and weeks into the operation.

As I was managing that, ambulances from all over were coming in. We tried to organize them, move them inside from West Street so they were safe. It was like I was at the gates of Shea Stadium at the end of a game. People were just running towards us.

Ambulance crews were approaching me: Chief, I'm a haztac unit, let us go in there. I said let's get organized, they know we're here. About ten minutes later that same haztac crew came to me and got in my face. He wasn't

insubordinate, but he was very aggressive. I pick him out as a sample of the work force there. Employees with an unknown danger but wanting to go and do their job and help people. I again, in a firmer tone, said you have to wait to get direction.

Later that crew -- and one of the things that I clearly said to that paramedic or EMT, I'm not sure what his medical certification was, that it's my job to get you home at night to your family. Let me do that job. Some half hour later that same individual came over and thanked me and understood the reason why I stood my position.

As time went by, many more resources started to arrive. We had Secret Service personnel at that location that helped us to develop a secure area separate from the public and to operate.

Chief Pascale arrived. Several supervisors arrived. At that point it appeared that Chief Peruggia was the only person we were hearing on the radio. Chief Peruggia was trying to manage the operation.

Sometime later -- and again, the clock stopped -- he requested my response up to the command post location. At that point you have to envision that the only thing we're able to see is large columns of smoke and hundreds and thousands of people running towards us.

I remember going over to Chief Pascale and turning the Chelsea division over to her. I remember hugging her. I said Fran, they asked me to go to the command post. I'm not sure if I'll ever see you again, because of the unknowns of the situation. She said let me go, I'll go for you. It's okay. They asked me to go to the command post. I'll go down there.

I took my aide, along with Lieutenant Byrnes in a command car, and we proceeded down West Street. I was scared. I was scared.

We approached the command post. Chief Peruggia asked me to come down because he needed the help. I started to manage the operation, and I saw that command by committee was not going to work here. Everybody was putting ideas in.

I said to Chief Peruggia: Don't take this the wrong way. But I'm going to take the

job from you. At that point in time I assumed the responsibility for EMS operations, located next to the Fire Department command post and tried to put a strategy together.

The hardest thing is that we didn't have contact with the outside world. We couldn't get through to headquarters. We were not sure what system policy decisions were made or implemented. We knew the people would come through and do the right thing, because that's what the Fire Department is made of, specifically the EMTs and paramedics, no different than the firefighters. When it comes down to it, they want to try to do the best job they can.

We were setting up our operation and probably the most frustrating thing was that there were no patients. We had been trying to get a handle on the divisions and we put some structure to it. We set up a north and a south division; south being down by Battery Park, north being up by Chambers Street. Slowly an organizational structure started to be developed.

It was sometime later that Chief McCracken made it up to the command post. We

spoke about some policy issues and where I saw the organizational structure needing to go. I tried to provide my recommendations. One of the objectives was to get the EMS system back in operation.

One of the hardest things to swallow was when I asked for a call status on the city. The dispatcher indicated that they were holding in excess of 400 assignments. I had to make a decision. I was looking at the enormity of this situation. I had to be concerned with Mrs. Jones having chest pains in the Bronx or in Brooklyn. We had a large number of resources up at Chelsea.

Initially, I conferred with the fire incident commander, Chief Nigro, Chief Burns and Chief Carruthers and, I'm sorry, Chief Butler and Chief Carruthers. They asked me not to de-escalate any resources at this point in time.

Losing the concept of time, I eventually -- or we eventually released 20 to 40 ambulances back to 911, and the 911 system started to come back.

In speaking with Chief McCracken, we had the concern of putting the 911 system back

into operation. The way I recommended to do it initially was to utilize mutual aid resources for the scene operation and return the city units back to operation.

That would do two things. A, we get the city people eventually back to their stations so we can regroup. It's difficult to take units from New Jersey and outside New York City and ask them to do 911 calls in the system when we didn't have the infrastructure for it.

It was very hard to keep focused at establishing a strategy with the devastation in front of you. It was like building an EMS system from scratch. I remember through the night meeting with Coast Guard officials about hospital ships coming in, talking about DMAT, disaster medical assistance teams, coming in. It was like putting a system together from scratch.

During this period the news started to filter into the command post about the passing of Chief Ganci, Father Judge, Commissioner Feehan, the reports of EMS, firefighters, police officers and civilians missing. This was not going to be an operation that we will secure in an hour.



As I indicated, I started my day about 5:30 in the morning. In between and amidst the chaos, I had to get phone calls to my kids and to my parents and to my in-laws to let them know I was okay and to make arrangements for my kids. I knew I wasn't going to be home that night.

The day that started as any other day at 5:30 in the morning on September 11th ended when I went home about 9 to 10:00 the next morning. The days and weeks following it were scary. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], but things evolved, structures were put in place, things were modified. I probably did not talk to my staff from Division 3 for several days.

It was an event that I will not forget. I think what's most troubling is in doing major assignments in the past, you go home and people watch them on the news and it's a forgotten memory in a day or two. In my local parish in Williston Park there were approximately 17 to 20 people missing from our little neighborhood.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So here as we sit on October 15th. Tomorrow I have to go to the funeral of her friend's father, along with many other funerals and memorial services.

I think what's frustrating is usually I have to deal with this stuff inside myself. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for this opportunity.

Q. Chief, if I might just ask you one other thing. When you were, just going back to running into the garage in the World Financial Center, that, I assume, was building one coming down, the first tower.

A. That's correct.

Q. After that do you remember where you were when the second one came down?

A. There's two other collapses that I

remember. I believe when the second one came down we were probably in that Winter Garden area. I remember again that same silence but yet roar and the vision.

I remember when we had gone down to set up the command post. I was working with Chief Peruggia. It was another fear for our life when Seven World Trade Center wanted to come down.

Sometimes you just don't know where to run.

Q. Chief, unless there's anything else you can think of or you want to add, I thank you ever so much for the interview, your thoughts and all the rest.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I cannot begin to fathom the feelings of the families of the police, fire, the EMS and all the civilians who are groping with this horrific disaster. We just don't know where it's going to go next.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. Once again, thank you ever so much,  
Chief.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview concludes  
at 1125 hours.

File No. 9110097

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT CHAD RITORTO

Interview Date: October 16, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 16th, 2001. The time is 1541 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT RITORTO: Chad Ritorto from Battalion 43, EMT 3015.

MR. RADENBERG: The interview is being conducted at the Fire Department headquarters, fourth floor, in the BITS offices. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Please start with when you went into Manhattan.

A. Well, previously I called my battalion, told them that I was available. They stated that they didn't have anybody for me to work with at that time, to stand by. I then decided to proceed down to the World Trade on my own. I put on my Fire Department uniform, got all my gear. I went down in my personal car, down to the World Trade Center.

I parked my car at approximately Albany and the West Side Highway. I then proceeded on

foot to where they were doing forward triage, which was at Liberty and the West Side Highway. I met up with an EMS chief; I'm not sure of his name. I met up with a chief, and he made me staging officer.

We were in the process of collecting keys, and all of a sudden we heard somebody say run, the building was coming down. We looked up. Sure enough, the building came down.

I then proceeded to attempt to evacuate the area by running west across West Side Highway from Liberty and managed to hide underneath the pedestrian foot bridge underneath the concrete staircase that leads from the street to the bridge.

At that point I took cover. Building debris came down. I was struck on my head, my arm and my leg. I received a laceration over my right eye from it. With several other EMTs and paramedics from unknown destinations, we then went into the World Financial Center, and we managed to go through that building and come out on the gateway plaza walkway. From there we proceeded down towards Battery Park along the

esplanade when the second tower came down.

After that I went back to where my car was and got in my car and proceeded north of Chambers. There were numerous patients that we were treating. There was debris falling from the windows of the buildings. There were bodies coming out of the windows. There were body parts all over the street.

I don't know. That's pretty much the gist of what went down. It was scary.

Q. So when the first tower collapsed, you were under here?

A. Right.

Q. In here?

A. Right. I was actually on this corner, because they were --

Q. On this side?

A. Right. They were pulling people out of this building. People were coming out of this building here, out of Two World Trade Center. There was an exit right here. This was forward triage. Initially they wanted us to go in there, but one of the captains didn't want EMS in there.

Q. A fire captain or EMS captain?



A. An EMS captain. A fire chief told an EMS captain to bring about 30 EMTs into that tower, and the EMS captain didn't want to do that. So the fire chief got a little annoyed at him. All the EMTs stayed outside. But if the EMTs weren't outside, we would have had a lot more EMS fatalities when that other tower came down, because most of the EMS was outside and they were able to actually scatter down Liberty, down Washington, and down the West Side Highway.

I was tripping over EMS guys underneath this bridge. They were like Hazollah guys and guys from Cornell and people from Metro Care.

Q. This was forward triage over here?

A. Right.

Q. Liberty and Washington.

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember who the EMS captain was?

A. I don't know. I don't really remember. Everything just happened like so fast. You were more worried about looking up. I had this feeling that we were too close because there was debris coming down. The aluminum siding, that

was just coming and it was just flopping down. It was in the air and looked like paper, but when it came down, it made such a crash.

I told one of the chiefs we were way too close, we were way too close, we need to pull back. No, no, no, we're safe from here. I'm like, all right, whatever.

Then somebody just said run, the building's coming down. We ran. I remember looking at the building. I was running for the building. There were guys in the doorway waving everybody in, trying to pull everybody in. I wasn't going to make it.

I hid under that bridge. I tripped over somebody, and my helmet flew off. Then I got pelted. I managed to put my helmet back on and then just prayed. Then all of the debris came down. One minute there was light and air, and the next minute there's nothing. It was darkness and dust.

You took one breath, and all the soot went in your mouth. It just dried your mouth instantly. You're taking it out of your mouth. It was like I didn't want to take a deep breath.

I'm taking small shallow breaths so I don't inhale all this stuff.

I'm fumbling over debris, big bricks. I remember I saw the windows of the building, and I grabbed something. I burned my hands on it. You can see the scar here. I burned my hands on it. Then I went through the window. Then I remember seeing all the computers, and the lights were still on. The computers were all intact. There was really no debris on the ground. It was just really dusty in there.

I managed to meet up with a bunch of other paramedics that were all in there.

Q. That was --

A. That was in that building right there.

Q. This here?

A. Yeah, the building that had the green dome on the roof. It's got to be the World Financial Center.

Q. Yeah, one Financial.

A. That's what I'm thinking, One World Financial Center. It's the only building that's right there.

Q. When you initially got into the center,

you said you parked your car down here around Albany?

A. Around Albany or Carlisle.

Q. At what point in what was going on was that that you got there? Was the second tower already hit?

A. The second tower was already struck. I got there probably a half hour after the second tower got hit. So we were there for about maybe 20 minutes, 25 minutes, maybe. Time is like really sketchy. When we pulled up, it looked like a Sunday afternoon. There was nobody around, but there were cars everywhere and you can hear the sirens. You can actually hear the fires burning up in the buildings.

There were like body parts all over the street. You couldn't even recognize anything. You just knew it was body parts because they were wrapped in clothing. It's like you're thinking, wow, that must have been some -- because there was debris everywhere. There were pieces of metal. There were people laying around. It was incredible.

This was down over here. This wasn't

even anywhere near. There were body parts along the West Side Highway about as far as here, about two blocks south. It was incredible.

We looked up, and it was just like a scene out of a movie.

Q. When you got up to Liberty and Washington, that's where you met up with the EMS captain?

A. Right.

Q. So there was an EMS chief there too?

A. Yeah, because he asked me, "Who are you with? What unit are you on?" I was like, "I'm extra personnel from Battalion 43." He said, "Good, you're staging officer until I can get somebody else down here. You're staging officer."

Q. You don't remember who that was, the EMS chief?

A. No. An older guy with a mustache, grayish-black hair. There weren't too many EMS chiefs there. I don't know if it was Chief Grant or -- Chief somebody. I don't know. I couldn't even remember.

Q. How about EMS units in that area?

A. There were two or three Fire Department ambulances there. When I was doing staging, I was collecting keys. Most of the ambulances that were there -- we had Hazollah there. There was Metro Care there. There were two ambulances from Broad Channel Fire Department there. There was a Cornell truck there. I remember seeing the Metro Care MERV. It was down closer to over here, to where Three World Trade was. They were closest. They were in front of that.

That's pretty much as far as ambulances goes. Mostly Metro Care and voluntary hospitals and like three or four Fire Department ambulances.

Q. Did you recognize anybody on the crews from those?

A. From Metro Care. I used to work there. So everybody that was there I knew. I pretty much rendezvoused with them because I was doing staging and just sticking with people we knew. It was just easier for me to know whose bus is what.

I don't recall if there was anybody -- I don't think there was anybody there from my

station. There was nobody there that I knew from the Fire Department. Nobody there that I knew from the Fire Department. Some from Metro Care and that's it.

Q. You were down over here when the second tower came down?

A. When the second tower came down, I was on the esplanade helping carry some injured firefighters to an ambulance.

Q. Could you show it on the map?

A. Yeah, right over here, because this is where -- we walked down from here, and we were carrying the injured firefighters to this point. There was an ambulance here. We took their stair chair because he couldn't stand anymore.

So we took the stair chair, and we grabbed the stair chair and wheeled him just about as far as we could find an ambulance that was running. We tagged a Lutheran truck, and we put him in the Lutheran truck and they took off. Wherever they went, I have no idea.

Q. Do you recall his name or company or anything like that?

A. No. All of that stuff is just -- those

minor details, they're just gone with the wind.

Q. Where did you pick him up?

A. He was right outside -- he was in the gateway plaza. He was in the park area, where the park was. Because when we ran into this building, there were mostly EMTs. I think there was one ESU cop, and the ESU cop was leading us into the bowels of the building. I'm like, "Where are you going? You're bringing us further into the building. We don't know what kind of damage is up top. We need to get out of here."

So we went back the way we came, and we found the door. It was a door like this, and it had sheetrock. The door was locked, so we kicked out the sheetrock. When we opened up the door, we happened to be like in the lobby.

When we were in the lobby, that's where all the firefighters were in there, and they were waving us out. We saw the flashlights and stuff. They were waving us out, and we all ran out. That's when we hooked up with this injured firefighter, and we started carrying him down.

We walked down just about as far as you can. It's like now that I think about it, what



we should have done, we should have walked north, because as you're walking south, when the second tower came down, we were already down like by -- there's a pier down here or something. There's like a little pier or something.

Q. Okay.

A. And they were bringing up boats, power boats or regular boats. They were shoveling people off, and whenever they were bringing them, I don't know. It got so crazy. Then the second tower came down, and then an even darker cloud of dust started creeping over the park.

People were just freaking out and trying to jump on the boats. It looked like a riot. Women and children first and everybody -- I'm like, look, the towers are down. That's it. The towers are down. Everyone needs to relax and keep walking, keep going, keep going. Everybody was just freaking out. The harbor boats were packed. They were starting to teeter-totter.

I don't know. It was crazy. I was like, you know what -- then an EMS lieutenant, I met up with her, and she was like, "Oh, we have to go to Liberty Island." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. Do you know who that lieutenant was?

A. No, it was just a female EMS lieutenant that was down there.

Then I met up with one of the guys from Metro Care that I knew, and we just started walking. We walked back through the plaza, and I think we went down Rector Street. We came through here and walked back up West Side Highway. It was like, all right, you know what, we need to get out of here. We need to get out of this dust cloud. It's not doing anything for us.

I was walking back to my car, and I expected to see an I beam through my car. I thought my car was going to be destroyed. But my car just had dust on it. We got in my car, and we just drove around the entire plaza like around 1 PP. We went all the way around and came back up to over here. I just parked my car somewhere up here.

Then we just started walking around. Then we went into the Port Authority building that was over there. We got equipment, flashlights, helmets and stuff. They evacuated us out of there because they thought the building was going to explode or something. They said there was a gas leak. So we ran out of there.

I met up with one of my good friends from Cornell somewhere on West Street. He saw the injury on my head. He said, "Where are you going?" I was like, "I don't know. I've got to go to a hospital. I'm going somewhere." He said, "Well, park your car somewhere." I jumped in my friend's car, and we jetted up to Cornell. I was like the first patient into Cornell.

There was a Fire Department liaison there. He took my name, he took my shield number, he took everything. He had my equipment. He had everything. He took everything down. They did whatever they did. I got stitches and whatever. Then I met up with him. I never heard anything from him either. The Fire Department didn't know I was there.

What did the Fire Department liaison

do? He had Fire Department ID on, and he was like, "I'm a liaison. Give me your name, give me your shield number." I specifically told him I'm from EMS, the Fire Department but I'm EMS. I'm not a firefighter; I'm EMS. Make sure you -- it's a big difference.

Q. He was from the fire side?

A. Yeah. He was a Fire Department liaison. I'm pretty sure it was the fire side. I don't think we have any. He took my name and stuff, and that was it.

Q. Okay. Anything else you want to say, comments?

A. No. Pretty close experience. Pretty scary. It might sound stupid, but I would do it again if I had to. I'd do it all over again. I don't care.

Q. I thank you.

A. Thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1457.

The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110099

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT AMY MONROE

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

A. MONROE

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time now is 0934 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned area of command.

A. Lieutenant Amy Monroe, EMS operations.

Q. We're conducting the interview in Chief McCracken's office, 7th floor, 9 MetroTech, Fire Department Headquarters, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

If you can, begin with the morning's activity, lieutenant.

A. I responded to the triage, actually the staging center at Broadway between Fulton and Dey Street. Immediately after staging some of the vehicles, I immediately moved to the triage center, which was in front of the Millenium Hotel. That was at the intersection of Church and Fulton, directly in front of World Trade Center 1, which is the north tower, and I began to work there as the transport officer responsible for transporting patients and making sure patients were being transported to

A. MONROE

appropriate hospitals.

Q. How did you become aware of the incident?

A. I actually saw it on TV at home. I called my battalion and the officer there -- I was actually at that time working for Battalion 4 -- was screaming and saying get in here, just come in here.

Q. How did you get down to the location?

A. I drove my personal car to the station and I drove an ambulance to -- had somebody drive me in an ambulance to the location.

Q. Were you given any specific direction on where to go, where to stage, anything like that?

A. I can't recall how I knew, but I knew where the staging area was. I think maybe I just heard it over Citywide. But I did know where to go.

Q. When you arrived, where did the ambulance leave you?

A. We parked the ambulance on Broadway, Broadway maybe and Dey, maybe a little bit further down, further south.

Q. Did you encounter any other officers?

A. I did. Lieutenant Bill Melaragno, he was staging up on Broadway as well, and as I walked down to the triage site, Captain Janice Olszewski was in charge

A. MONROE

there and Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck was there. I don't think I recall any other officers being there.

Q. As far as time reference, this was the first plane, second plane?

A. This was after the second plane had hit.

Q. Then what happened after that?

A. We proceeded, like I said, to transport patients, and during the middle of transporting -- we had a lot of patients triaged which were sitting against the Millenium Hotel and which were walking wounded. Some of the burn patients we were transporting. We didn't have a lot of units down there at the time. They were trying to hold the units back onto Broadway. So we only brought the units down when it was absolute they were ready to pick up patients.

Q. Right.

A. Then World Trade Center 2 collapsed, and when 2 collapsed, I actually ran east on Fulton. I was at the triage on Church. I ran east on Fulton, right near St. Paul's Chapel.

Q. That's where you stayed?

A. Yes. I ended up actually on Broadway and was caught in the collapse.

Q. What happened after that?



A. MONROE

A. After I was caught in the collapse, I eventually -- there were three civilians. We were in a vehicle. Eventually we were able to drive out of the collapse. One of them was pretty serious. We all, of course, suffered from smoke inhalation. We drove as far as we could. The vehicle died because it had been exposed to, I guess, so much dust and everything.

We drove to 14th Street and Broadway, and another lieutenant who had seen us who was not in the collapse was driving a command car, which was Lieutenant Adam Brynes. So when our vehicle died, he picked up all of us and the patients and we proceeded to Beth Israel Hospital. I ended up at Beth Israel Hospital for some time and the other patients, the three civilians, were treated there.

Q. Anything else that you think is important, any other EMS people that you may have run into or spoken to that you recall?

A. No, I did not really. I actually -- I'm trying to think. I did leave there. I was actually medicated, I had an IV, but I left there because I was actually on the FEMA team. So I left there and walked home and then went back down and redeployed right after that with the USAR team.

A. MONROE

But as far as the officers that I ran into, you know, after the collapse or during the collapse, no, it was just so quick, it was so sudden, and then really everybody was separated, totally separated.

Q. Did you have a radio?

A. I did have a radio, but there was really no radio transmission until just -- during the collapse it was so silent, and then after that I think the -- I believe I did hear over the radio, what I was hearing, what I thought I heard -- it might be wrong, but this is what I thought I heard -- was deploy the weapons of mass destruction, the antidote kits, and that's the only thing I heard and that's the last thing I heard and I didn't hear anything over the air after that. I don't know if my radio went dead or whatever. My radio was covered, though, so it was broken.

Q. The crew that drove you down there, do you remember who they were?

A. The crew that drove me down there? EMT Peter (inaudible). He was actually on light duty. He drove me down there.

Q. Anything else that you think is important?

A. No.

MR. FEILER: I want to thank you for spending

A. MONROE

the time with me for the interview. It's 0940 hours  
and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110100

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHIEF JERRY GOMBO

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. GOMBO

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 17, 2001. The time now is 0828 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

A. Assistant Chief Jerry Gombo from the EMS operations.

Q. We're conducting this interview in Chief Gombo's office on the 7th floor at EMS command. The interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001, and if you can just begin at the morning of September 11th.

A. Sure. I logged on my usual early time, somewhere prior to 0530, on that Tuesday morning and arrived at my headquarters somewhere around 6:00 o'clock. At that point I was just doing my usual morning activities, reviewing UORs, just checking the schedule, making sure that everything is in place as far as getting prepared for the day for the most part and reviewing the night activities.

Then I recall somewhere prior to 9:00 o'clock Ross Terranova, Lieutenant Terranova, who at the time

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was working down or situated down at 5 Operations, came running into my office informing me that a plane hit the World Trade Center and it was observed by Chief Ganci from his office. I ran down the hall just to see because you could see the towers from the other side of the building, which is just a few yards down, and I actually saw what appeared to be flames and smoke in one of the Trade Centers.

I gave Ross the keys to my car and I came back here to secure my radio, which was charging, and we went down to the garage to start responding to the assignment. From looking at the job history for that day, I know that they assigned me to that job at about 0855 hours. At the time three cars left from the garage heading in that direction. It was Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, followed by myself. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge and headed towards the Twin Towers.

Q. Were you with anybody?

A. With Ross. Ross Terranova was driving the vehicle and it was just the two of us in the car. We were there quickly. As quickly as we left here, the entrance ramp to the Brooklyn Bridge was already shut down by PD, you know, accept for emergency vehicles. So on the approach to the World Trade Center listening

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to the units getting assigned to the Center, we knew that -- well, obviously, we saw that there was a plane at that time, we didn't know the significance, whether it was a small plane, a large plane. The initial information was extremely sketchy at that point and I believe there was no Manhattan Chief on duty at the time. I believe Chief Hart was in refresher. So I knew that I was for the most part the first due Chief in coming from Fire headquarters.

Anyway, as we made our way downtown, you know, traffic started getting a little congested already. As we approached the towers, we ended up leaving the car in close proximity of Trinity Church, you know, there's a cemetery there, downtown.

Q. On the map, where would that be? What would be the cross streets?

A. Okay.

(Pause.)

A. I don't believe it's on your map.

Q. Would that have been somewhere on Church Street?

A. It's off of Church. Trinity Church.

(Pause.)

Q. Actually, we can look for that later if you'd

J. GOMBO

like.

A. Okay. Anyway I parked over -- well, actually Ross parked over in close proximity to the church and then we walked on foot towards the World Trade Center, which was down the block. It was in close proximity, but not so close as to interfere with any type of responding vehicles or anything like that.

As we approached the towers, this would be from the east side heading west, we saw people it appeared, lots of people, you know, possibly hundreds, evacuated, which was a good thing. It seemed to be fairly quickly but in an orderly fashion as well. We saw several EMS units and I believe they were Fire Department units at the time. I know I did converse with a few of them because they were treating patients laying on the floor and this was on Church. Everybody was wearing their helmet, which was good because there was debris, like just different types of parts. It might have been like plane parts, in fact, they did look like it, on the floor with stuff coming down as well.

So I told the crews to cross back up to the further side of Church and that's where they should set up their treatment and triage area at that point. I



J. GOMBO

don't believe there were any officers there, but there were like two or three units operating and they were setting up triage. I don't recall any of the employees' names.

At that point I wanted to head to the other side of the tower where our planned staging is located. I walked around on foot, of course, the other side of the tower. Now I'm on the south side of the tower, which was West Street, and there I encountered several other EMS units that were coming into the area. People were exiting the building, the Trade Center. Lots of people, it appeared, in orderly fashion, but there didn't seem to be any patients, if you will. Everybody was like walking and no one was complaining of any types of injuries or ailments or anything like that. So we set up a staging area on West and Vesey and I think that was communicated to citywide that that's where the units should come in to.

At that point I did come across several EMS officers. Captain Olszewski from this office as well as Bruce Medjuck, who I sent around to where I initially came, because when I arrived there, there were no supervisors operating on the east side of the

J. GOMBO

building.

Q. Church Street?

A. Right. So there were no supervisors there.

Although I knew more bosses were responding in, I felt it important to get at least a captain and a lieutenant there. So they were both directed to go over there and to set up a staging and treatment sector there.

On my side now, I ran into several people, Captain Stone, Captain Pinkus, and Ross, who was with me the whole time. He had the radio and stuff like that. Those two captains, I believe Chief Basile and maybe Captain Sickles as well. I did a similar type of setup on that side as well. Because there were no patients at all, we communicated that staging should be set up there. I believe I left Captain Pinkus over there to coordinate staging, which at that point was going to be our primary staging location.

I inquired as to where the Fire command post was set up at that point and I was told that it was in the lobby of the tower.

Q. The north tower?

A. Tower No. 2.

Q. Which I believe is the south tower?

A. Let me just look at your map. This is the

J. GOMBO

north tower. Where is the south tower on your map?

Q. Right here.

A. I believe it was the north tower, correct.

So I made my way over to the command post with I believe Captain Stone, and we took a crew with us on foot, you know, the ambulances were staging there, and we headed towards the lobby of the command post.

As we were approaching the lobby of the command post, at that point we saw there were a significant amount of body parts, torsos, half torsos, arms, the whole gamut, as far as what one might expect from this type of disaster. I made my way into the command post. I informed Chief Hayden, who was at the time the incident commander, that we're here and that we're going to be setting up EMS operations staging outside. Obviously, he was involved with coordinating a significant amount of Fire resources. And I said, if you need anything, I'll remain in eyeshot.

Once again, although there were a significant number of body parts exterior, there were really no viable patients to contend with. There were not many civilians in the lobby where the command post was being set up. It was I believe the security desk. You know

J. GOMBO

where when you come in into the center you check in.

Q. Right.

A. So there were like security personnel by the command post, building security that is, you know, and a significant number of Fire personnel as well as PD, but beyond that, few if any civilians that I noticed.

I did run across Chief Gabriel, who was assigned to OEM. We conversed a little as to what the game plan was going to be as far as EMS, once again, keeping in mind that people were exiting and we weren't being overwhelmed with patients.

I believe at that point we couldn't transmit over the radio from in there, the citywide frequency, you know, it was just too much interference. Even though we were in the lobby and the majority of the windows were blown out, we weren't able to transmit. I don't know whether it was because it was just interference or whether there were too many units on the frequency.

So we were there for a few minutes and Chief Callan from the Fire Department, one of the tour commanders, I believe it was him that initially told me, but it could have been Chief Hayden, I don't recall which Chief told us that they were going to secure the

J. GOMBO

command post from the tower lobby and move it directly across West Street. Also, that I should pull the EMS resources out of the tower, it was deemed not safe, you know, and that they would be pulling out the Fire resources as well and set up across the street.

I believe I left Chief Basile and Captain Stone there to make sure that all the EMS resources were pulled out. There was a lot of emergency personnel coming in and out and given the fact that we don't have protective clothing, the decision was made for EMS to evacuate. I left them there to make sure that EMS personnel were evacuated from that area and returned to the staging location. Then once again on foot with Ross I started to make my way out of the tower lobby and go to the command post, which was going to be on the other side of West Street.

So I arrived at the command post there and at that point they had the Fire command post set up there and Chief Kowalczyk was on the scene. He was the major that day, so he functioned as the operations officer, and I was there. I recall being with Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan and several other Chief officers from Fire and, once again, Fire set up their post, their command post, and we set up a few feet away in

J. GOMBO

eyeshot. I asked Chief Kowalczyk to continue functioning as the operations officer. Apparently, he was able to communicate with the radio at that point.

I believe that the initial staging that was set up on both sides of the building were functioning and active. However, once again, there weren't a significant number of patients to deal with.

No sooner than, I don't know, it seemed like a few minutes -- and I have to just share with you at this point, my times might be off. At the corner of my eye, the second plane now comes into the building. I know that there was a time line that you shared and...

Q. 9:06.

A. 9:06 was the second plane?

Q. Right.

A. Okay. At that point I would say that we knew it wasn't an accident. I mean, two planes on a clear, sunny, warm day, into the Trade Center, we knew that there was something very unusual going on. At the time of the impact, we were able to feel heat that was generated from the explosion at the command post, which was across West Street, and West is a fairly large street with that island in there, and debris was showering all over West Street. And I can only tell

J. GOMBO

you from what was within my eyesight.

It appeared after that the pace of the civilians exiting the building increased, but throughout, for the most part, there was an orderly evacuation of personnel. I guess the sense was disbelief, you know, because here you're dealing with one major operation and before you know it, it's like a mirror image, if you will, but this one, when you were there and you heard it and you felt it, it had more of an impact.

So at that point I believe I was conversing with Chief Kowalczyk about the operation and the deployment of some resources, both ambulance and Chief officers, further down West Street to deal now with this other plane into the tower that we were going to have to contend with.

No sooner than that, I guess the best words that I could describe this, it felt sort of like an earthquake. The sky darkened and you heard this thunderous roar. It was like a volcano, if you will, not that I ever experienced a volcano, but I guess that's the way I could describe it, and this cloud just coming down. The ground was shaking and this roar and at that point everybody from the command post -- I

J. GOMBO

forgot to tell you where.

The command post was in the driveway of 2 World Financial Center. It was a fairly large-sized driveway. So we were on the incline, we meaning the Fire and EMS command post.

Q. Where would that be on the map?

A. Right here.

Q. Okay.

A. 2 World Financial Center, there's a driveway leading to West Street, similar to the driveway when you come into Fire headquarters, but whereas this you drive into the building and it's covered as soon as you enter, there the driveway was open; there was no roof on top of it. So you had the incline and we were set up right at the base where the street met the driveway and, like I said, Fire and us, and then this thing came down on us, which obviously was the first tower that collapsed, and everybody took cover or ran.

I'm not sure whether I was pulled or it was instant, but based on the incline, we went into the garage of 2 World Financial Center. I know Ross was with me. I believe there were maybe up to 20 other emergency service personnel there. However, it was difficult to tell because what happened was we ran in,



J. GOMBO

we dove behind this white van that was parked like at the base of the driveway. We ducked behind that and then the whole place became dark as a result of debris just filling the whole driveway. And mind you, this was a significant-sized driveway. We knew there was a lot of debris out there and, like I said, it appeared that some of the people ran in the opposite direction from the garage and quite a few people did retreat to the garage.

There were no lights. It was dark. As much as you wanted to breathe, it was extremely painful. I'm sure I'm going to reiterate what other people experienced. Every time you took a breath, your mouth filled up with this soot, powder, cement, whatever it was, and although you didn't want to breathe, you didn't have a choice; you had to breathe.

I carry a flashlight on me always and I know that people always are like why do you need a flashlight? So I took out the flashlight and I turned it on and you still couldn't see in front of you; there was that much debris and stuff. So what I attempted to do to the best of my ability without having good vision -- and there were a few of us. We were talking. We were able to communicate with each other. I think what

J. GOMBO

we wanted to make sure was, before we advanced to the back of the garage, because we were not going to be able to exit the way we came down because the whole exit or entrance to the garage was covered with debris, we just wanted to make sure that we weren't leaving anybody that was like partially trapped, if you will, behind us. To the best of our ability we made sure that we moved forward not leaving anybody behind. However, you know, we didn't know what was going on at the other side of the rubble.

We made our way up a small staircase that looked like maybe the attendant or security office of the garage, and I recall seeing this water cooler, you know, the five-gallon jugs of water. There were a significant number of people down there at the time and we were all rinsing our mouths just trying to get some of the soot out of our mouths so that we could breathe. There were a few Fire personnel. I remember an OEM, Harry Winters, was down there with us. Who else? Several firefighters.

We asked them, because they had their Scott packs and stuff, to find us an exit because clearly we weren't getting out the way we came in and we couldn't see any doors right in the back. There was a phone on

J. GOMBO

the desk where this water cooler was, but it was dead. I mean, there were no phone calls. So at this point we didn't have any type of radio communication, the cell phones didn't work, the hard line phone didn't work, there were no lights, and once everybody got into the office area we closed the door behind us and put something by the door to try to keep the area as clean as possible without all this soot. I mean, it was beyond belief the amount of soot that was in the garage.

We must have been there, although it seemed like an eternity, a few minutes when they informed us that there was an exit onto the marina side. If you look over here on the map, it would be the North Cove Yacht Harbor. So we exited from the back through a staircase. We had to go up because we were in the basement and we came down on this side and it was amazing. When you exited on this side, it was a sunny, beautiful day. There was no debris, no anything over here.

So at that point we decided we were going to, once again, return to the command post. The way we were going to go about doing that is there was a walkway or a driveway that led you onto North End. We

J. GOMBO

were going to go back down Vesey to West and be at the command post, you know, to continue coordinating the operation. When we got to Vesey and North End, right over here, there were a significant number of EMS resources staging there.

Now, it was like wild because when we were in the harbor here, it was like nothing happened, and as soon as we were able to make that turn and visualize what was going on, it was like going from one extreme to the other. There was still soot coming down, and one of the amazing things, that paper, I mean, as much as that doesn't seem significant, mounds and mounds of paper just scattered all over the place. So, as you were walking, if you could imagine walking in a snowstorm?

Q. Right.

A. That's what it actually was. You had this soot coming down on you and then in lieu of snow on the ground you had mounds and mounds of paper, I mean, an unbelievable amount of paper. I'm not talking about one. Just every time you took a step there were mounds of it, it was inches high, plus all of the soot and debris and stuff like that.

So there were quite a few ambulance resources

J. GOMBO

not limited to Fire, you know, and the MERV ended up here. At that point we were informed that the initial triage that was set up on West and Vesey retreated one block at the time of the collapse.

Now, when we ran into the basement, we lost contact with the world. We really didn't know what was going on on the outside, and our initial objective was to make it back to the command post.

Anyway, we did bump into a whole bunch of EMS personnel here and they had a treatment sector going on in the lobby of the building here. I don't recall the name of the building. But, once again, it was a fairly large lobby and seemed to be a safe environment because you didn't have all that soot or garbage coming down, and there were patients and treatment going down there.

Q. Civilian patients or a combination?

A. I believe primarily civilian patients.

So I recall at that point seeing Chief Carrasquillo, I believe it was, and it seemed to me that they were able to deal with the patient load that they had there. So I was going to attempt once again to make my way up Vesey back to the command post.

No sooner did we get, I would say, several yards down Vesey Street heading east to west when the

J. GOMBO

second tower came down, and once again this huge mushroom cloud, not going up but coming towards us. So there was a rush of primarily uniformed personnel. Now, according to this, the north tower, that was at 10:29.

Q. Right.

A. So I take it that that's an approximate time that we started making our way there. So once again we retreated back to this lobby area.

Now, at that point there were several EMS chiefs that were there. I remember Chief Goldfarb, Chief Villani, Chief Pascale, Chief Carrasquillo and Chief Kowalczyk, besides myself. We went into the stairwell of the building here just to converse for a little while and to put together some type of strategy.

Once again, mind you, we have no communications with the outside world and, in essence, what we were able to see is just what we were able to see on this block. So there are no phones, no radio communications.

We spoke, and after assessing the situation, the decision was made that it was not safe for us to try to make our way back up Vesey to West. We did not

J. GOMBO

know whether there were other buildings in danger of collapsing, and at that point the decision was made for the EMS resources to go to two different staging areas on the outskirts of this incident. The decision was made, on the north, Chelsea Piers because there was a large parking area. We really wanted to move back out of this area until it was deemed safe for EMS personnel to operate. On the south, we decided that we would use the ferry terminal, Staten Island ferry terminal. So those were the two staging areas that we were going to send the EMS resources that were there after they finished treating the patients.

I divvied up the chiefs that were with me. I believe I sent Chief Pascale and maybe Chief Villani to the ferry terminal and Chief Basile I sent, I believe it was Chief Basile, up to Chelsea. Mind you, all of this had to be on foot because the cars were elsewhere and we didn't know their condition, and because there was no communication with anybody. I told them, I told these chiefs, we're going to go there. We're going to secure this area with patients. I left Chief Carrasquillo behind until we were able to evacuate that location and go to those two locations.

I decided that I was going to make it to One

J. GOMBO

Police Plaza. Knowing that we weren't going to have access to 7 World Trade Center where the OEM office is, the most logical thing that came to mind within walking distance would be One Police Plaza. So I figured I would go there. I took Chief Goldfarb, Ross Terranova and Chief Goldfarb's aide with me.

That was the plan. The resources would go to those two staging areas and I would go to Police Plaza and try to coordinate activities there.

Q. At this time I'm just going to change the tape to side B.

A. Sure.

(Pause.)

Q. Continuing the interview with Chief Jerry Gombo, go ahead, sir.

A. Okay. So we started on foot heading towards One Police Plaza, the four of us, and as a result of what was going on and what we were able to determine, we decided that we would need to take the scenic route, if you will, around to One Police Plaza. We were going to walk north and up around City Hall and then come around to One Police Plaza as opposed to trying to make our way across Vesey. Although that would have been quicker, at that point I deemed it to be too



J. GOMBO

dangerous.

We walked a few blocks. I remember a few things that come to mind that I most probably will never forget. The silence. It was just dead silent, like it was like the middle of the night, but yet it was sort of day with this haze. You saw this smoke, the soot was still coming down, papers all over the place, and that was pretty much the way it was throughout our journey.

I came across Chief Callan, who prior to that, the last time I saw him was in the lobby of the Trade Center where they set up the command post. He appeared not to be injured but to be in a daze. I informed him at this point I was going to make it on foot to One Police Plaza. I invited him to come with us so that we could set up some type of operation there and coordinate it with the other agencies, and he opted not to take me up on that offer but to attempt to make it back to the command post.

I asked him that, if he was able to do that and if he saw Chief McCracken or any of the other EMS chiefs operating on the scene, to let them know what we did as far as the two staging areas where we retreated to and let them know that I was making my way to One

J. GOMBO

Police Plaza. Just like I didn't know who else was operating on the scene as a result of not having communication, I knew that people were going to be inquiring as to individuals' whereabouts and things like that. I knew it was going to take us some time to make it to where we needed to go.

Q. Where did you meet Chief Callan?

A. It had to be several blocks from Vesey and North End. I believe we were walking up North End and I believe that actually changes into some other street. But that was the direction which we were heading in. We were heading north on North End, once again, in an attempt to come around City Hall, which is not on the map here, I don't believe.

Q. This is City Hall park here.

A. Oh, City Hall park. Okay. So our plan was we were going to make our way up North End, City Hall Park, I think to -- well, it had to be somewhere I would say around maybe Murray or Park. The reason why I say that, after we passed Chief Callan, after another few minutes on foot, a police officer from the Chief of Department's office came by in a golf cart and he noticed us. We were wearing our uniforms and helmets and he saw the stars. We flagged him down and asked if

J. GOMBO

he would be kind enough to take us over to One Police Plaza. We were trying to get to command and control. He was gracious enough to do that. So the four of us got onto this golf cart and this officer took us over to One Police Plaza, which saved us a significant amount of travel time because we were going to do this on foot and he was able to take us practically to the door, which was great.

We got to One Police Plaza and we went up to command and control, which was on the 8th floor. I went over to the desk and inquired whether there were any other Fire Department personnel here, which at the time I was informed that there were not. I told them that we're from the Fire Department, EMS, and the room was jammed with all different types of representation from agencies. However, we were the first Fire Department reps to get there.

Within a few minutes they were able to give us some table space and some phones. I made contact with several locations at that time. I called FOP, fire operations. I introduced myself to them and gave them the phone number and I told them that I was at command and control. I made similar notifications to EMD, our office here in operations, and we just tried

J. GOMBO

to coordinate whatever information we were able to get from EMD or FOP at the time.

We were there actually for quite a few hours. We finally left that location at I would say roughly 10:00 o'clock or so in the evening. I called and had Captain Connelly, who was on duty, come down to man command and control. There were other Fire personnel. I don't recall the officer's name, but there were a few other Fire personnel that prior to that, like several hours after we arrived there, also arrived to represent the Fire Department.

When I left in the evening at 10:00 o'clock, we made our way, once again, on foot, back towards the EMS command post at that time. We went past Trinity Church to see if I had a car and if it was there. To my surprise it was. It had a significant number of scratches needless to say. The driver's window was smashed. But the car was there. There was Fire apparatus around it functioning with Fire personnel. There were charged hoses all around the car.

So I figured it was safe. At that point we made it down to the command post where it was good to see some of the EMS personnel that either I didn't see beforehand or I did and we got lost in the sauce, if

J. GOMBO

you will. I stood there for a little while and then made it to my car and I was able to get it out, and that's the story for 9/11.

Q. I just want to ask, after the first building collapsed, you said that the Fire command post had relocated to World Financial Center?

A. No, no. From the lobby. That was prior to the second plane hitting.

Q. Did you ever re-establish contact with them or you never made it back to them?

A. No. We weren't able to do that. We came out on the marina side, because the whole garage, we were buried. We were buried in the garage. So I made it out the marina side up North on Vesey and attempted to go back, but when we made this turn and went up Vesey, that's when the second building came down, and at that point the decision was made that there was no sense in jeopardizing our safety in making it to that location. If we couldn't even make it up this block, we said there would be no way that the command post would be able to be functioning at that location, and that's when we made the decision for the two staging areas in a safe proximity away. Because we had no phones or radio communications, that's when I decided I would

J. GOMBO

hope that One Police Plaza would be the most logical thing. I found out after we were there for several hours that an interagency command post was set up at the Police Academy up on 23rd Street. As to why that decision was made, that was beyond me.

Q. Was there any other EMS personnel or Fire Department personnel that you remember seeing that we didn't talk about?

A. There were so many names and faces. I tried to mention the ones that I had the most interaction with. I'm sure that I left out some specific names and locations. Most probably, somewhere as I was crossing over from the tower to the secondary Fire command post on the other side of West Street, I saw a lot of EMS personnel, but at this point the names escape me. So I was only able to recall the ones that I interacted with or had conversation or gave direction to or things like that. But that's my plight and I'm glad I'm here to share it with you.

Q. I agree.

A. Hopefully I was able to give you some insight as to some of my actions during the course of the day. Unfortunately, afterwards we found out that the people we were with at the command post didn't make it. You

J. GOMBO

know, Chief Ganci and Commissioner Feehan and Father Judge, just a tremendous loss, a tremendous loss.

Q. Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

A. You know what? I think I gave you everything that comes to mind, leaving out some of the gory details, which I'm sure other people have talked about. But as far as an operations perspective, I think I shared with you the most significant things that I'd been involved with.

It was just a very difficult situation. I've responded to my share of MCIs during my career and this was a very complex situation as a result of the ongoing collapses. From a patient perspective, it wasn't that complex, but there was absolutely no communication other than face to face. No cells, no radios. The only thing I could say, in retrospect, I believe that we made the best decisions as to how to proceed operationally given our assessment of the situation and the resources and the scenario that we were presented with.

MR. FEILER: Okay. I want to thank you very much for participating. The time now is 0923 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110101

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC NEIL SWEETING

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17th. The time is 11:31 a.m. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview this morning at Battalion 20 with the following individual.

PARAMEDIC SWEETING: Neil Sweeting-5274, assigned as the paramedic coordinator for Division 6.

Q. Neil, I'm just going to ask you if you can recount the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. I was in the division office, which is located up in the north Bronx on the grounds of Jacobi Hospital, when we started hearing reports of a plane crash into one of the towers at the Trade Center.

Chief Pascale from the division got paged, and she came out and told us about this. We started hearing reports of it over the citywide radio frequency. We turned the television on in the office, and pretty shocked, just as anybody was.

My first thoughts were oh, my God, some

plane was drastically off course and crashed into the building. I didn't realize it was a large airliner. I thought it was a small plane, just seeing these awful photos of terrible fires and smoke billowing out.

We hung out at the division. I was chomping at the bit with everybody else wanting to get down there, but the chief was holding us back until she was assigned.

While we were watching, we were hearing the radio on the citywide frequency, and all these units being assigned and supervisors calling for more help and trying to set up different treatment areas, when we saw the second plane hit.

I remember saying to the other coordinator, Steven Pilla, that we saw the plane go by, and my first thought again was oh, my God, this pilot must have been blinded by the smoke or distracted and then he crashed right into the building. At that point we realized something was seriously wrong.

At this point Chief Pascale said, "Let's go," and we all ran out of the office and

jumped in the car and started heading downtown. There were five of us in the chief's car. I was driving Chief Pascale, Lieutenant Mike Cahill, Steve Pilla and EMT Amedegnato.

We started heading down, cut across the Bronx, got to the West Side Highway, and proceeded down and actually got caught in traffic around 125th Street -- 158th Street. The Police Department was turning all vehicles off the highway, but they were ushering emergency vehicles through. But we got tied up in the traffic up until that point, which was annoying but at this point, as the story went, it may have had a tremendous outcome on the five of us in that car.

I remember driving down the highway, and when we got down, oh, into like the eighties and nineties on the highway, we started to get a really good view of lower Manhattan and you could see the two towers burning. It was just surreal.

We started hearing terrible screams on the radio of people yelling, "Oh, my God, there are people jumping! There are people jumping!" I was at the first Trade Center disaster in '93,

and I thought that was going to be the biggest thing I would ever experience in my career. I had a feeling this was going to be even worse, not knowing they were going to fall down.

As we got closer, I remember saying to the other people, I said, "This is the kind of fire, there are going to be a lot of people dead in this. This is also a fire that you're going to lose firemen in. This is where people are going to die, unfortunately."

We proceeded down. We got stuck in a little more traffic down below 57th Street when we hit like 12th Avenue, the West Side Highway there. We made it down, and we got I believe it was around West Street and Barclay, which is probably about two blocks, a block and a half away, when Steve actually said, "Oh, my God." I looked up, and the tower's falling.

We didn't hear it, which was really weird, because we had the radios going and the sirens going. So I didn't hear the sound of it initially. Once I looked up, I started hearing it.

At this point hundreds of people are

running at us. We pulled over -- we looked for a spot to park initially, but then there were so many people coming at us that I was going to run somebody over. We just abandoned the car on the corner of West Street and Barclay.

Q. Where you indicated the number 1 on the map?

A. Yes.

I remember all four doors opened up before we even stopped moving. We pulled over, we jumped out and popped the trunk quickly and grabbed our helmets and just started running and got enveloped by this cloud of dust that's so vivid to everybody now.

We didn't really understand the magnitude as to what had happened at this point. There was just so many people running towards us. We kind of went west towards the Hudson River. We were just totally enveloped in this cloud. You couldn't see. It was choking. It was in your eyes. I felt like somebody had poured a cup of sand down my throat. It was horrible.

After about ten minutes of this, it kind of calmed down a little bit. People stopped

running. We actually headed back down closer in to see what we could do and got down to Vesey Street.

Q. At that time were all of you still together?

A. No, we weren't. No, I'm sorry, we were together. We all ended up back on Vesey. We didn't walk down as a group, but we all kind of migrated, because people were kind of turning back and going down to see what they could do.

We got to Vesey, and we were -- at Vesey and West there's I believe it was part of the Financial Center. We started helping some people that were coming out and looking for a triage area. People came out, and Chief Villani, a chief from the Fire Department from EMS, said, "Let's start setting up a triage area here in the lobby of this building."

We started actually seeing a lot of patients. They were bringing a lot of people in. We didn't have a lot of equipment. We didn't have anything with us. But even the units that were there, people had run and abandoned their equipment during the initial stages. But people

started getting stuff, and we brought a lot of oxygen in. It was basically just a quick triage, and we were trying to move some people out.

I remember a battalion chief coming in. There were two chiefs. There was one chief that we were treating who was badly injured. His head was split and he was bleeding bad, and he was just in a daze and just staring straight ahead like he had no idea what had happened. None of us.

Another chief came in -- and he was telling us first, the first chief, "We shouldn't be here. We should get out of here." A second chief came in and said, "Listen, we need to move. This is a terrorist act." That's the first time I thought that way. He said, "We've got to get away from this place."

Q. They were both fire suppression chiefs?

A. Fire suppression chiefs.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. No, I don't.

We started moving out, loading people up. We brought a bunch of stretchers at this point, and we were just loading patients, just

putting them on the stretchers. We had some people that were pretty seriously hurt, some head injuries, a couple people -- there was one gentleman that was unconscious, a lot of people with respiratory problems from all the dust, eye injuries from the dust. We started throwing them on stretchers and running and getting out.

I remember the maintenance guys or engineers from this building, this big office building, brought big jugs of water that we were using, and we were wiping people down and flushing eyes. They had a cart full, like a linen cart, full of towels, which was great, because we were wiping people down. It was really very helpful.

I remember when we heard abandon the site, I said, wow, this would be really good to keep with us. So I started pushing this cart, and I got stuck in the doorway with it, when we started hearing this rumble. I can remember -- I specifically remember this like twisting sound of metal. We were probably about half a block away from the complex at this point.

You heard a big boom, it was quiet for



about ten seconds. Then you could hear another one. Now I realize it was the floors starting to stack on top of each other as they were falling. It was spaced apart in the beginning, but then it got to just a tremendous roar and a rumble that I will never forget.

We started running. People were diving into the back of ambulances that were open and on the hoods of ambulances, cars. Anything that was moving, they were trying to get into. There was one ambulance, there must have been 25 people piled into the back of it: firemen, policemen, civilians, EMS. It was just incredible.

I remember the MERV bus with the ramp that it had going up the street. The guy didn't even stop to unhook the stairs of the ramp, and everything was dragging down the street. I thought it ironic, watch somebody live through this and get run over by the MERV or wiped out by this ramp that was dragging behind the bus.

We started running, but there was a woman on Vesey Street between the Financial Center and the complex, like the plaza, and she got hit with something. She just went down like

a shot. She got up and tried to run and just collapsed again. You could see that she had snapped her leg, her ankle, like right at the TIB-FIB and her ankle. It looked like when horses snap their hoof. Her foot was just flopping. The poor woman was trying to run.

I saw her, and a paramedic from Cabrini Hospital -- I don't even know his name -- he must have seen her at the same time because he ran down and we picked her up, the two of us, and started running west on Vesey Street towards Battery Park and the promenade and towards the Hudson River, when the wave, the first concussion, came down the street.

When you were that close, there was like a wind to it. I'm 6-4 and 240 pounds, and it knocked me down like a rag doll, ten feet away, down the street. I landed on top of this poor woman. She was having a bad enough day.

We picked her up, and I ran to the corner of the Financial Center building and I guess that's part of the promenade there for Battery Park, the walkway there.

Q. Right over here, World Financial.

A. No. Right. Okay. I picked her up like right in here. We ran down here. Actually on this building here, we dove down the side of that building to use it as a --

Q. You're indicating you dove around the corner of Three World Financial Center?

A. Of Three World Financial Center.

Q. The American Express building?

A. Right, into this like courtyard here.

Q. Okay.

A. And used that as a shield to cover us. I think that I had my helmet. Actually since I was -- actually the assignment I'm in right now is a very last-minute, temporary assignment. I didn't have my helmet or coat or anything with me. It was all back in my station in Harlem. So I grabbed somebody's helmet from here. Thankfully when I ran out the door I grabbed somebody's helmet.

When I dove around the corner, I just curled up into a fetal position and covered my head and just tried to ride it out. There was just this roar. It was pitch-black. I could feel stuff hitting me but not like big debris but

smaller stuff that was mixed in with this cloud. It was choking. It was hard to breathe. You couldn't see.

Then the concussion and the wave stopped, and you were still encompassed in this, but the pressure wasn't to it that was initially there. We were stuck in this cloud probably for 20, 30 minutes afterwards. The cloud eventually went blocks and blocks up the street.

I grabbed an ambulance. I flagged an ambulance coming down, and I had the guy quickly toss some stuff into my eyes, water, because I couldn't see. I remember reaching in and grabbing one of his masks that he had. I just threw that on.

We picked the woman up, and we just put her on the bench. He had some people in there, so we just laid this lady out on the bench. That was the last I saw of her. It was an ambulance unit from St. Vincent's Hospital, and they just started heading north up out of the area.

I stayed and was walking in a daze. I remember there was so much stuff hitting my eyes I had to put my sunglasses on, which was really

kind of funny. Here it was dark. It was almost pitch-black, and I'm walking around with sunglasses, just because I needed something to block my eyes.

Then it was just eerily quiet. It was just so quiet. I don't know if it was from the dust that was just suffocating the air. But for the next 10 minutes, 15 minutes, nobody knew where to go, what to do and where to start.

There were a lot of people walking around, but there weren't a lot of -- now that I think back, there weren't a lot of walking wounded. There really were more just people stunned that were walking around.

I'll never forget how quiet it was. I said it to people that day, but it's actually an analogy that seems to be being used a lot, like after it snows when it's very quiet. You could hear people calling out. You could hear a lot of firemen, their alarms going off on their air packs.

I had a radio with me which I lost when I got tumbled, thrown. It came out of the holster. So I couldn't talk to anybody. I

didn't know where anybody was. The four other people I was with, I had no idea where they were. I knew they were with me when we were in the Financial Center and then started running out. I found two of them in about 45 minutes. Another one was about an hour after that as we started heading north out of there.

But Chief Pascale we didn't find for about five hours, and I was like, oh, my God. We had no idea where she went. One of the guys said they saw her running -- when the second one came, they saw her running north. I'm figuring that she wasn't buried, because we weren't right underneath it. We were knocked down by the concussion, but we weren't -- so I didn't think she was buried or anything, but I didn't know where she had gone at this point.

So we tried to see what we could do down there. Some people were coming up to me asking for help. My first 45 minutes of triage just involved telling people "Go north. Get out of here. You don't want to be here." They would ask me, "Where do I go?" I said, "I don't know. But you don't want to be here, go north. They'll

be setting stuff up." Just get people out of there.

I don't know who it was that told me, but we finally started moving. When I started running into some of the other people, they had some radios. They were advising people to go up to Stuyvesant High School, which is on the corner of Chambers Street and West.

We got in there, and we were in the building like a minute when people just started screaming, "Run, run, run, run." I'm like, oh, my God, now what? It was one of those things, you just run when everybody's running. People are just storming out the back doors and just running up the highway, West Side Highway there.

I find out that it was -- one, somebody said there was a bomb, but it turned out it was Con Edison was screaming that there was a gas leak and they were afraid something was going to happen, it was going to blow up. Everybody was just so jumpy at the time that just the slightest thing would set them off. People were just running.

So we ran out of there. We were then

again milling around, not knowing where to go. We were originally trying to get a triage area set up in Stuyvesant High School. Everybody bailed out on that. Then there were people saying to go to Chelsea Piers, which was a good hike. That's a good 20 blocks away.

We started walking, and I got up to north Moore Street and the West Side Highway. It's part of the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The Port Authority had kind of taken over this building, the police. They were using the gymnasium as their meeting point and treatment area there for their employees.

They started calling, "EMS, EMS, EMS. We have some guys hurt." So we went in there. Again, I didn't have a radio. I couldn't talk to anybody. I didn't have any equipment. There were a few people; mostly walking wounded, but there were a few people that were pretty banged up, a lot of respiratory problems. I didn't even have an oxygen tank.

I guess a few more units or some people must have gotten flagged because some equipment started coming in there. I don't know where Port



Authority -- they must have had some type of contingency for their equipment from their other facilities at the airports or bridges and tunnels, because they started bringing truckloads of their equipment in.

So we stayed there, the three of us. We stayed there pretty much for a good four or five hours. I'll never forget, they brought a truck, and it looks like they must have gone to a Duane Reade store because they must have just held the bags up and people cleared the shelves, because there were like hundreds of bottles of Tylenol and bandages and tape and gauze. I could just see they probably cleared out a Duane Reade store.

So we tried to do whatever help we could. Some hospital doctors were showing up, and they started bringing some of their own equipment in. So we started having some stuff. That wasn't one of the actual EMS or Fire Department established triage areas; this was pretty much one of the hospitals started doing it at that point. But we hung out there for a good part of the day helping out, seeing what we could

do.

I remember I figured I need to call my wife. I know she's going to be freaking out. She's a schoolteacher over in Queens. I called her school, and I couldn't get through. It was busy, busy, busy. At first I couldn't get her cell phone. I finally -- I guess this whole thing happened before 11:00. I finally was able to get through to her at about 4:00 that afternoon.

I went and started walking around Manhattan College, Borough of Manhattan College, and I left the gymnasium and was walking through the hallways, just trying to find any office that was open that I could use the telephone. I was sitting at some guy's -- I don't even know who it was, somebody's desk, and using his phone.

I called my house. She wasn't home. Something made me just call her family in Queens. It turns out that's where she went, because they had closed a lot of bridges down in the city. She couldn't back over the Whitestone Bridge. I finally got a hold of her; it was probably a little before 4:00.

She had heard the reports of possibly hundreds of Fire Department rescue workers possibly killed or missing and the whole scenario of the towers falling. I cried. I was crying. I left two messages on my machine in case she had gotten home. She said, "You sounded terrible. You sounded like a wreck. Your voice was shaking." I was. I was visibly shaking.

I remember asking one of the Port Authority cops what exactly happened, because I didn't know the whole magnitude. I didn't know anything at this point. It was several hours before I heard about the Pentagon and the plane that went down in Pennsylvania.

I didn't realize the towers had come down completely. I thought it was just the area above where the planes had crashed. I didn't realize they had come all the way down. I thought the tops had fallen off. They were like no, they're down completely. I said, "No, no, just above where --" He's like, "No, I'm telling you, they fell completely."

I didn't hear about the whole other episodes out of town for several hours. Then I

started hearing people telling me. I heard rumors that the military shot down planes, they had attacked the Pentagon and there were other sites. I didn't really grasp the magnitude of it at that point.

I didn't get out of there until -- I don't know, it was probably close to -- I don't know -- 10, 11:00 that night we kind of got relieved. Then we were back at 4 a.m. I went down there for another 20 hours. I remember being down there again that day. I was exhausted. I spent time in the morgue, which was just a grim, grim detail the first day or two. Very few intact.

I remember while we were there another building fell, like a half a building that had been damaged. I remember everybody running again, just taking off and running. I just said, I'm tired of these buildings falling down on me. I can't run from these things anymore.

Q. Was that still on the first day?

A. That was the second day.

Q. Seven came?

A. Well, seven fell about 5 or 6:00. I

was there. I was several blocks away, but I saw the whole thing go down. Again you could see everybody running. But I didn't run because I knew I was far enough away.

But this other building that fell, it was one of the ones damaged that was like a fire damaged building that part of it fell the next day.

It was something I'll never forget. The scariest time of my life. I remember after I got up after diving behind that building, I was counting body parts to make sure everything was still with me.

Last night actually -- this is, what, a month, five weeks later -- I go to graduate school in Manhattan. School had been canceled because of this, and last night, October 16th, was our first night back. It was the first time that I had driven down the West Side Highway since that day. I've been to the site numerous, numerous times, but I always came in from the east side of Manhattan. This was the first time I went down.

It really shook me up because I

remember -- I started getting these flashes of I remember the towers burning and watching them and saying oh, my God, this is where we were when we were saying things like people are going to die, this is going to be terrible.

I can still see these pictures in my mind of them burning. It really shook me up when I went to class. Then they're not there anymore. It's just like this major hole in New York City down there. It was terrible.

So that's pretty much my story. I consider myself very lucky since I was close. I wasn't right underneath it, but I was close enough to actually be knocked down. At this time I'm thankful I was stuck in traffic, because I was driving a chief and we would have been going to the command post. There are numerous chiefs in the Fire Department that are no longer here.

I've heard stories from chiefs and fellow chiefs aides who were right there that really had very close calls. I wonder where we would have been if I hadn't lost five minutes in traffic on the highway.

It was tough. Since I've been in this

position, I haven't been on an ambulance since I've been working in the coordinator position, and I'll be in this position for like another month. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So that's about it. I'm thankful we're here.

Q. Any final thoughts you want to add?

A. I think it was -- even in the total terror and chaos of the first 45 minutes to an hour, even, prior to the buildings falling, there were just some incredible acts performed by people, not only from EMS, the firefighters, the police officers.

But when the towers came down, the way

people came together and just started doing whatever had to be done -- there were people that weren't officers, EMTs and medics, that were stepping up and saying this is what needs to be done. We need to set up something here. Let's just do it. People just talking the initiative on their own. I think it was amazing how it ran.

Unfortunately there weren't a whole lot of people to help, unfortunately. At the first Trade Center in '93, there were a thousand people and we were very stretched. But this time we weren't -- unfortunately there weren't people to help.

But people stepped up. We were just seeing people going above and beyond and people walking around in a dazed look but still doing what had to be done. It was amazing.

In a way I feel fortunate in a way that I was there because I got to see people at their best and do what they're trained to do and do what they're not trained to do and pull it together. That's an experience I'll never forget.

On the other sense, sometimes you hope



you weren't there because the horrors that were experienced will never be forgotten. I had a lot of trouble sleeping for the first couple of days, because I was working an incredible number of hours. I really had trouble sleeping. It was rough, but we're going on.

This has to be rough on you over and over.

Q. Yeah, it gets a little rough, a little rough.

A. It was close. I had a doubt at one point when the second tower came down and when we picked this woman up, especially when we were knocked down on the street. I really had some doubts for a few seconds there. It was scary, but we got through it.

It's changed me. I'm in graduate school. I have a little ways to go. I was kind of thinking that I may explore other options, career options. Even just prior to this I was getting a little tired of the EMS field and the job. I've been in this for 15 years with the city now. I was looking, kind of exploring things out there. If the right opportunity

presented itself, I probably would have stepped up and taken it.

But right now, even after all this, I feel right now I can't leave right now. There's something that's holding me here. I haven't looked at anything since, but it's just I don't feel like I can leave right now. There's something that has to be -- until that pile's cleaned up and these people are found, I don't think it would be right for me to leave. It may not be the best thing for me to stay, but it wouldn't be right for me to leave. So we're going to hang in and stick it out for a while and take it day by day, see where we're going.

I think that's enough.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The time is now  
12:06.

Neil, I thank you very much for your time. This interview is now concluded.

File No. 9110102

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF FRAN PASCALE

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: It's October 17th, 2001. The time is 9:45 a.m. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck with the New York City Fire Department. Today we are conducting an interview with the following individual.

CHIEF PASCALE: FRAN PASCALE, division commander of Division 6, EMS operations.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center disaster task force.

Q. Chief, we would just like you to relate to us the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. Okay. I was in my office, and I was on the telephone. My staff yelled to me from inside of the outer office, indicating that a plane had gone and hit the World Trade Center. They happened to be watching this.

I got up, and I went over to the television. I came back into my office, and I'm not sure if I actually called up citywide or RCC

to see if they had any additional information. From there we turned on the radio, and I knew there was quite a few chiefs starting to head down that way.

Right after that we were told another plane hit the World Trade Center. From there I called up citywide, and they had indicated that maybe I'd better go. They hadn't heard from anybody.

What was actually on my mind is one of the things that chief McCracken always stresses, that he didn't want all of the chiefs to respond at one particular incident. Wait to see if somebody calls you, because otherwise all the resources are tied up in one location. So that kind of stuck in my head.

With that I told my staff, "Let's go down into the World Trade Center," especially since citywide hadn't heard from anybody. So I took my staff, and in my head I was already planning that if I go to another sector or part of the division, depending on how they divide up the World Trade Center, I would have a sufficient amount of staff that we wouldn't have to pull

from anybody else.

I also told the paramedics to bring their ALS equipment in case we would need them for triage. Most likely we stocked up the car with not only equipment, I had a lieutenant, I had a light duty person. I figured she could do at least recording or tracking, whatever the need would be. The lieutenant certainly could handle a sector, and I had the ALS coordinator, which he could certainly be used as a paramedic. So that was my plan as I was going down there as additional resources.

Ironically we wound up having a lot of traffic, and we were finding it a hard way getting down into the World Trade Center. Anyway, we finally managed to get onto West Street and it started to move, the traffic.

As we got into the area -- and I guess it was somewhere on West Street, 30th or something like that, you could really see the type of disaster that was going on. My initial thought was I wonder what really was happening down there.

As we hit, it was West and Vesey, there

was a police officer -- we hadn't even parked the car -- who starts yelling at us, telling us to get out of the way, pull the car and run, the building was coming down. Either he heard a rumbling, whatever. At that moment you could see this big cloud.

We pulled over. It was as we're on Vesey Street we pulled the car to the side. We started to see the debris starting to come down. We really didn't grab any type of equipment. We just figured, well, they know more than we do. We better start running.

At that point --

Q. Would you just indicate on the map where you are with a number 1, where you left the vehicle.

A. It was between -- I think it's called West End and West. So it's on Vesey between West and West End. So it's right in between that block and -- where is it? It's on --

Q. North End?

A. It's probably, yeah, only a few car lengths, figure halfway into Vesey. So maybe midpoint.

Q. Just indicate it with the number 1.

A. I would think that's --

Q. Just an approximation.

A. -- pretty close to it.

We basically got out of the car. We didn't really take anything because by then there was a tremendous amount of debris, and it became engulfed with a black cloud. I did not see where my personnel had ran for cover. It just got very black, very dark. I think probably at that particular moment I was more concerned, thinking of where did they go, because I could not see anything in front of me.

I continued to run up, and I think that's where I ended on West End Street. It was quite a while before I saw anybody. Then all of a sudden as the cloud kind of lightened up a little bit -- I was pretty much covered with the soot and the debris -- I started to see a tremendous amount of ambulances coming my way. That would be actually on West End.

From there what I did is I notified citywide that I had numerous vehicles coming in my direction. At that point I think I was the



only voice there because I was standing right on the corner.

What I did is I stopped the vehicles, and by then I saw I think it was Lieutenant Cahill and a few other people that I knew. Some of the ambulances I knew.

So what we decided to do at that moment was to set up a secondary staging. I didn't even know where the original staging was. So we separated the ALS units from the BLS units and make it very easy to identify should they start calling in the units.

I remember seeing Hazollah. I remember seeing some voluntary units. Definitely there were Fire Department units. I did not see any of my peers at that time. I saw a few other lieutenants. I know there was Lieutenant Cahill. I think I may have seen Captain Stone. I'm not sure. Everybody was pretty much running around a little bit.

We were able to set them or at least guide them on both sides, and what we had automatically did with them is make sure that all of their -- they put some type of face mask on

because there was really very heavy -- it was dark, but it was clearly up a little bit.

So we got everybody to put face masks on. There were a few patients around. A few people had some minor injuries. We had whatever units were there on site -- whether they were ALS or BLS. We separated them. They were continuing to give some treatment. They actually transported a couple of people from that location.

Q. Where was that staging area?

A. This was all along West End Avenue. Let me just see where -- this is North End. Where they actually came from -- they had to come from the north side behind the Merrill Lynch building. I believe that was the one. That's where I saw all the units coming from. We had a couple stragglers coming up from Vesey, but most of them were coming from that location.

We were doing fine. I hadn't seen still nobody there. All of a sudden we heard I guess a rumbling of some sort. ESU had showed up with their vehicle and stuff and said we have to go before they collapse, get everybody out of the

area.

I wasn't sure which way the building was going to fall, so what I did is -- and with some of the EMTs and paramedics that were standing outside with their vehicles, we just told them to get in the vehicles and start moving, just get out of the area.

I ran. I didn't think of taking a vehicle or jumping inside a vehicle. I stood there watching everybody leaving the area. The cloud was worse than actually the first one, I thought. Total darkness, completely darkness, a lot of debris.

I wasn't able to see, and I don't know if it was just the fact that my glasses were so full of soot and everything as well as getting some soot in my eyes. I certainly didn't need anything more. Seeing was difficult enough.

With that, I remember running, and only later on did I realize I was somewhere around the school. Most of the units left. I did not know, actually, at that point where to take cover. There was nobody else with me. I didn't even realize I was in the street until I heard

something behind me.

When I looked, turned around, I remember it was one of our vehicles. They were kind of lost. They didn't know where they were traveling, and I just told them keep straight and go very slow, only because we couldn't see anything in front of us. I just reminded this unit -- I think it was the medic unit from Coney Island, and if I saw the fellow, I would know who it was.

So we spoke a couple minutes. I told him to watch whatever's in front of him, because I had no idea if the vehicles had stopped, if there were people just abandoning them, or people were walking in the roadway, like I was walking in the roadway.

If I didn't turn around, he probably could have ran over me. He never saw me, and I never saw him, except he had the lights on and I saw the flashing.

From there I remember a woman coming out of the cloud, and that's the best way of saying. She was coming, up it would have been off Vesey Street. Actually my first initial

response was I told her, "What are you doing here? You have to get out of here." I remember her reply, and only then did I realize she had a camera. She turned around and she said, "You don't understand," and she disappeared, just disappeared.

I would not even be able to find out who she was, what she looked like. I know it was a woman. My reaction to her comment was that she must have been media and she wanted to take as much film as she could, because it was a large-size camera, movie camera, that she had. So it wasn't just somebody just walking around with this. She just disappeared.

Then as the cloud cleared up, I was like in a round circle, and I think that is where the school is.

Q. Stuyvesant High School or the college?

A. I think it was Stuyvesant. It goes around. I wasn't too far from there, and that's where I ended up.

I made my way back, and then I started to see other units kind of coming back. I remember speaking to somebody and asking them if

they saw any chiefs, anybody around. I think it was CHIEF GOMBO on the air. Somebody had directed me toward the building where there was going to be a triage area.

When I walked in the building, I remember seeing Carrasquillo. There was Gombo there. Who else was there? Lieutenant Cahill was there. I remember seeing Steve Pilla, who is my ALS coordinator, and I couldn't believe that that's where they were, so close but so far away. That was my reaction to them, where were you? I thought something terrible had happened. We didn't know. They didn't have any radios on them.

From what I was told, one group ran in the building and then a couple of my other employees ran into I guess it was a trailer. They all piled up in this trailer. I couldn't even tell you where the trailer was. They said it was close to where I was. I couldn't see a thing.

So I went into the area, and I saw Chief Kowalczyk, I saw CHIEF GOMBO. I asked about Chief McCracken. Nobody had an answer.

They had said they saw Chief Basile around. I wasn't sure who else was down there. I know Chief Goldfarb was down there. I didn't even know that Chief Villani was down there. A lot of people had responded down there. Until much later on I had no idea actually who went down there.

From there CHIEF GOMBO had requested that the chiefs all gather outside of the building, which I'm not sure the street. It was on the corner of that building --

Q. Stuyvesant is up over here somewhere.

A. No, Stuyvesant is where I landed up after trying to beat the cloud, which obviously I didn't. It was on the other side.

Q. The hotel, is that where you came out?

A. No, I don't think it was the hotel. It had a beautiful -- it could have been part of the hotel, come to think of it.

Q. Was it on the water or by the water?

A. Maybe it was Four World Trade Center. It may have been Four World Trade Center. I think they have a large -- I remember taking a look when I got into the building. What do they

call it? They had a garden in a dome.

Q. An atrium?

A. The atrium and everything. Then I remember somebody gave me some towels so I could wipe my glasses. Just little things I remember.

I went outside, and then CHIEF GOMBO wanted to basically try to get the sectors and whatever else needed to be done, start some kind of a plan.

I remember Chief Carrasquillo and I -- at first he had indicated that I was going to stay down there, but then he had wanted me to go up to Chelsea Street. He had asked me where my car was, and I told him -- I said, "It's parked, but I couldn't tell you the condition of the car right now."

He had asked me to take somebody with me, preferably a supervisor. I remember asking for Captain Pinkus. He was there, so the first person I saw. He had asked me if there was a way if he could possibly grab some type of vehicle or whatever and get up to Chelsea.

Believe it or not, I guess at that point I had no idea where Chelsea was. I



couldn't even think of how far are we from Chelsea. I'm thinking of everything was in such a small area. I would have never thought Chelsea being considerably different, you know, pretty far away. That was off on 17th.

So we looked at each other. We asked where this pier was, and Captain Pinkus and I -- and I couldn't tell you where we grabbed this unit, who this unit was. It was volunteers. We just told them, "We need your vehicle. Take us to Chelsea location."

I don't even know how far you want me to go into this.

Q. Just go a couple hours past.

A. Okay. This particular crew was ironic. They looked at me; I looked at them. They said, "No, we can't take you." I said, "There's not going to be any questions. You're going to take me, and that's the bottom line."

Between the two of us, the way we looked and the captain turned around and said, "You don't realize, this is a chief. Just listen to what she says. Otherwise she's going to take the whole entire vehicle." This poor crew, I

couldn't begin to tell you who they were, but I remember they had no stretcher. It was a half-equipped vehicle.

It was so funny, we finally managed to get into West Street again, trying to go up to the West Side Highway. As we were traveling -- it wasn't even West Side Highway. I don't even remember what street we were traveling on. We couldn't get down to the west side. We had to take a detour.

As we were traveling, there was a group of people who actually flagged us down. They said that we had a pedestrian struck. We're looking at each other. We're saying, well, this is good, there's no equipment, no stretcher, no long board, nothing in the vehicle. We better think quickly how we're going to lift up this patient.

Pinkus and I jumped out of the vehicle. The male was actually laying on his stomach. I rolled him over. We opened up his airway. We were able to get a pulse. It turned out that he wasn't actually a pedestrian struck. It was medical-related. Later on I understand that it

was cardiac-related.

So we rolled him over. I told the crew -- we did have oxygen. The crew brought oxygen. I attempted to put an OPA in him. He gagged, so that was a good sign for me. There was a couple of us who were able to lift him up, and we were able to put the man on a stretcher. We told the crew take him to the hospital. This was a situation we certainly didn't expect.

From there we jumped out of the vehicle. I'm not sure how far we were. It seemed like we were miles away, because I couldn't even tell you where we were flagged on this. Maybe it was even Broadway. It was a major roadway.

With that we were trying to stop other vehicles, because we had no vehicles. I mean, it was the craziest situation. Any other time you would say, well, I'll grab another command. There was no such thing of grabbing anything. You had to use your common sense.

So with that we went over to -- there was a group of construction workers, and I asked them if we could have a lift from the

construction offices. At that point there was no supervisor, and their truck -- we were going to hop in the construction truck. It doesn't make a difference at that point. Their truck was kind of jammed up with all sorts of material. They were actually constructing at a site there.

We ran in the street, and we tried to stop a vehicle. I remember getting very angry at this particular vehicle because it happened to be -- and I'm not sure, but it was definitely either a private contractor or one of their non-911 transport unit.

I remember looking at their name, and I said if I could catch their number, I better not see them again, because they just blew the light. They just kept on going. That really ticked me off, in plain English.

Some of the construction workers came over, and they said, "What could we do?" I said, "Whatever vehicle it looks like you could put two more people on for one stop, and they're going to take us to where we need to go."

Ironically we stopped a vehicle, and I don't even remember the type of vehicle we hopped

in, but we got our lift up to Chelsea Street. By then Kowalczyk was already up there. Truthfully just thinking about it, I may not even have seen Chief Kowalczyk at that initial briefing, because he was already up there. He was actually in charge of the Chelsea location. Actually Chief Gombo wanted me to assist Chief Kowalczyk with the staging up there.

I remember us jumping out of the vehicle and we walked over there. We then got word that they wanted Chief Kowalczyk back down to the site. I remember talking to Chief Kowalczyk. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

lot of people reacted differently during different times.

[REDACTED]

had offered to go back down there at that point. It really didn't make a difference where I was going to be. I stayed in the Chelsea area, and I basically tried to continue what he started. I remember there must have been about 75 vehicles lined up on the West Side Highway. So we were trying to organize that.

With that, I remember two bus loads of doctors jumping out of the vehicles and saying, "We're here to help. We want to go downtown." Basically I didn't want them to go down there. It was dangerous enough to start off with, but I think we needed to -- if we were going to use these medical personnel, we needed to use them the way they should have been, call them in, set them up.

When I saw all these bus loads of doctors, they had just finished a convention. I remember that very clearly. They were at a convention, so the whole entire convention closed down. These were surgical doctors, medical doctors and everything. They had asked, "What can we do in the interim?"

With that I remember Dr. Asada showing up and Dr. Neal Richmond. I had to let them know we had a lot of doctors; what could we do. Also, I wouldn't say this, but to keep them occupied. I just didn't think it was good to get too many people in an area that was really dangerous.

If I would have sent them down there and anything would have happened, I think that

would have bothered me. It was bad enough to control your own people that were down there. So we decided that the best thing to do -- and really it was a very good idea, although it wasn't used.

We went into the pier, and I spoke to basically the director of the pier, Pier 36. I could be wrong on the pier number, but I think it was Pier 36.

We got permission to utilize the whole entire pier, and we had a lot of resources which we really would have been very beneficial should the situation turn out other than having so many fatalities as opposed to the wounded.

I remember '93 because I was down at the World Trade Center in '93. We had more injuries as opposed to fatalities. So it was a bit different. We didn't know what was going on as far as fatalities down there.

So what we did is we got permission to open it up, and we set up probably an unbelievable hospital. We set up an area for family members. Should the need arise if the hospitals were inundated, that was going to be an

off-site hospital. It would have saved our resources as well as definitely it would have saved the resources from the hospital.

These doctors were very good. Where they got their stuff is beyond me. But if you walked in there -- it took them several hours to set up, but they had every type of surgical, plastic surgeons, medical; you name it, they were there.

We had a meeting with them, and we broke them up into teams. The teams were comprised of their professional -- what they were --

Q. Specialties?

A. Thank you. I couldn't find the word. Their specialty.

Then what we did is we assigned a team leader, and the team leader was either whatever EMT or paramedic we had, anybody who was very familiar with triage, we went over triage with them. They all got their little packet, and with the team leaders we were able to keep track of everybody who was at least in that place. Probably we wound up with 125 doctors and nurses



from all the hospitals.

We probably at any given time had 75 to 100 ambulances showing up. We finally got a trailer to have it like a command post and we were able to get that set up. That was all -- initially that was several hours.

From there I think it must have been around -- I don't know -- 4 or 5; it was still very light and everything -- I got a message to report back downtown. They were going to have a meeting. I don't know how I got back downtown, but I was a little bit more resourceful. There were a lot of Fire Department vehicles over there. I think it was a command car. They took me down there.

I was able to get down there. I left Pinkus there. There were a tremendous amount of people. There were people that were constantly showing up over there. We were trying to really manage the unit. They were all over the place.

We had actually asked the police, because we were trying to stop the units from all the areas, as well as our own, just bypassing and heading down to West Street, because everybody

wanted to be there. It's understandable, but it wasn't something that really should be. If we needed them, then they go down there. There was accountability of the people.

The only reason I kept this in my head is because when I was traveling down to West Street and after the first building collapsed, I really thought that a lot of chiefs may have been lost. To me it seemed like a very long time before I made any contact with anybody else. That really -- like, who was down there? Did we lose anybody?

Not to jump back and forth, but I remember people saying, "We don't know where this chief is. We may have lost that chief." It was like you didn't know. You really didn't know. So you were really kind of working in a blind there, so to speak.

So I guess when I got up to Chelsea that kind of stuck in my head and really stuck in my head to watch the people, because I lost my own personnel for a brief period of time, and they just ran in different directions. That's it. They just ran in different directions.

If we would have ran up to West Street or if we were there probably -- and this is probably one of our major discussions that my staff and I constantly have since this World Trade Center was if we got there another five minutes earlier, maybe even less, we would have been going to the command post. There's no ifs and buts about it. Maybe not even five minutes. We were right there on the corner. We happened to be in the car.

Not that we joke about it, but maybe in the sense of releasing one's feelings about it, we would say, well, we're glad that it was Neal that did the driving as opposed to somebody else, because we would have gotten there much quicker.

So these are just things to me it's kind of good to talk to the personnel. You sometimes need a little sense of a break or a little -- not that it's a joke or anything like that, but it's kind of a release and it lets everybody think a little bit more and release it out a little bit more, because I think everybody was kind of taken back.

Everybody wants to be very brave and

very tough. That's all well and good on the outside, but it's really the inside that you have to worry about.

So anyway, with the request for me to respond back down to the command post, I finally got down there and I remember seeing Chief McCracken. Probably during that whole period of time, "Did anybody see him?" Everybody kept on saying, "We don't know where he is." So when I saw him it was like, wow, you're okay. We kind of hugged each other.

Then I saw Charlie Wells, and I didn't even know the type of personal disaster that he was going through, we were all kind of war-like hugging a little bit and grabbing on each hand and support amongst managers, I guess you would want to say. I remember finally seeing Chief Villani, you start seeing other people.

So we were down there and we were talking, and they wanted to go over another plan to see what was going on and who was going to do what. Already it had to be fairly -- between 5:00. All of a sudden for some reason people started to run again.

I was there, and I remember Chief Fellini looking at me, and he said, "We've got to get out of here real quick." I guess that's when the world whatever came down.

Q. Number seven.

A. Came down. We were standing in the overpass, and I said, to myself, "Boy, these people run awful fast. I'm still here." I remember saying that. Oh, my goodness. I remember Fellini opening up the door, jumping in the car, grabbing onto me and pulling me literally into his car.

I remember another supervisor of mine, which was Lieutenant Haugh, coming up from in front of me, like, and we grabbed him and we told him, "Get in the vehicle." There was one more person in that vehicle, and I think it was Chief Butler.

Chief Butler and Haugh jumped in the back of the vehicle, and myself and Chief Fellini was in the front. He just hopped over his seat. He didn't care, and I just hopped right in there. We closed up the windows and doors.

I said to myself, oh, my God, I don't

believe it. It's scary. It wasn't as bad this trip, but it was three times. I said I just hope the fourth doesn't come down. You know what they say, you know -- my husband always says three strikes and you're out.

That cleared at some point, and all of a sudden everybody just kind of walked back. It was the strangest feeling, like where did you just go? They were all jumping. I was just telling them, I can't do all this running. My knees are killing me. You just left me. First my staff ran away from me, and then you guys ran away from me.

It was so funny, and I don't think I thought at that point that we were in a predicament either. I don't know why I didn't think it. But what brought it to my attention is I had seen Chief Fellini the following day in which I was assigned to the operations where Chief Cruthers was there -- I have to really look at that map to see where I really was. It was right by the Manhattan College.

Q. That's Chambers and West.

A. I think it was maybe one block down.

Q. Not exactly at the corner, but that's where.

A. It was somewhere around that area when the other building came down. I remember seeing Chief Fellini because when I was assigned to another job the following day, maybe two other jobs the following day, and there I went to the operations where -- it was the pile; it was ground zero.

I remember Chief Fellini turning around and he said, "You know, for a minute I thought that you all bit the dust." I looked at him, I said, "You know, I never even thought how precarious we were in again." I don't know why. I could not begin to tell you.

I don't know if you could say it was emotional at the time. I can't really tell you. I can only speak for myself to the point that I think it was -- you could not really grasp at first the significance, the catastrophic situation.

It took me a while, I think, and only really until after our first meeting with Chief Gombo did I really think about this as being a

terrorist act. I don't know why. Maybe you kind of block it out of your head. I can't really begin to tell you.

I just didn't digest that until they were saying that and somebody was talking about the Pentagon and everything. That just kind of took my breath away, a little bit, I think. God Almighty, this is unbelievable.

Also at that point I did not realize how many people we lost. As I was listening to everyone, it was a devastating feeling, a hollow feeling, I guess, maybe a numb feeling that some of these wonderful chiefs that I got to know -- I just couldn't believe they were not there.

(Pause.)

A. Then I started to hear -- I was very concerned with some of the people when I was told that there was a lot of ambulances, a lot of people injured. I started to hear a couple of my own people -- I lost three vehicles myself. You couldn't help, how did those people get in there so fast. I want to beat them up. I did.

I don't know. They must have been on heavy duty speed mode, because I could not



believe -- I mean, here you have what I had heard some of the people were missing. I could not believe somebody from Montefiore could have gotten down there so quickly.

I had heard two of my employees were somewhat injured. They were sent over to New Jersey. We didn't know their status. I knew they weren't critical or anything like that. I knew two more of my employees at that time getting injured.

I guess then the division mode took over, because I wanted to know how many of my people were actually involved. I said, gee, if they can make it from the Bronx, I know my Harlem people must be down there too. These are things that probably go really kind of search your mind a little bit.

Again, a lot of this really -- as you really start talking about the people that were being lost, who was definitely lost really was -- there's really no words for it. There really and truly are no words for it.

I would like to add that he was a great guy. He was the most cordial individual, funny.

He was always happy. It was good, because, you know, when you did the merge and everything you said it's good to have a relationship with these people. It was really very important.

He was a wonderful person to me. And I say that only on the EMS side. I'm sure you have your own wonderful words for him on the fire side. But just to know him of how he was with us was really important.

I could not believe Deputy Commissioner Feehan, I could not. And the Father, I think he was -- Father Judge. My response is how could these people have been in that building at the time. You just could not put it in proper perspective, losing these people. They announce the names, and people are being told that day.

I guess it was just very hard -- you took it in. You just kind of took it in. You walked around very strong, tough, whatever you want to say, because I guess it's the -- through the years what you need to learn, especially when you become any level, you need to be strong for your people. We kind of all earned that one way or the other, so when you go home you're somewhat

different.

That was the first day, the day I certainly really would prefer not to remember. But a lot of good people were saved, and we can only be thankful for that. That's the way it goes. Hopefully it never happens again.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add to the events?

A. Prior to --

Q. Prior to the second collapse.

A. It's hard to say -- well, no, it's not hard to say. It was the most disorganized feeling I ever felt. I could say that there was no sense of being organized. It was an impossible thing to be organized. But even though you were tempted at certain points to try to get yourself up and running -- and they talk about we've always learned through the years, EMS, well, I guess we could throw that in the garbage that day. It just didn't work. It just didn't work.

Just the biggest thing is you did not know -- people were just coming in. People were coming in. People coming in. You didn't know

where they were coming from. People that did not have uniforms. People you thought were on light duty wound up down there.

You just did not have the control for quite some time. Certainly I don't think it was within the initial 24 hours because so many people just kept on showing up. It was like everything else, people had to be down there. That was something people had to do.

It didn't matter if you were in the Fire Department or EMS, you were a volunteer, PD, whatever, just the strangers we had a tendency to bump into like just going up and down. But probably one of the most memorable --

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This is side two of the interview with Chief FRAN PASCALE.

A. Just a last note, I think probably one of the memorable times that I remember going up and down West Street, if you want to call it going up and down, was probably the people lined up supporting everybody. I think that was so important, and it was for everyone. I think that was really good for our own people. They have a tendency to think they're not appreciated. For

whatever reason, they truly feel that.

I remember speaking to the people when I was leaving there to go back to Chelsea. From Chelsea I wanted to go back and pick up the rest of my people. This is late in the evening. I remember just listening to people talk. And these were our units. These are supervisors, not chiefs, supervisors, looking at this and digesting all of this and saying, gee, we are appreciated.

It was really very good at that time to give them support, but the support was coming from civilians. You're not always thanked on the civilian level. These people were showing up with flags, clapping; signs, "We love you." It was so supportive. That went on for the longest time, into the wee hours, every day, every night.

I remember up to only maybe two weeks ago going down West Street and there was still a couple of people standing there, all by themselves, with their signs. Sometimes a lot of good comes out of some times that may be very bad.

This was really very good emotionally

for the people who were up there, and that just wasn't our people; it was a lot of different people. PD was up there, doctors were up there. A lot of people were up there. There were firefighters up there.

It was important to give them that boost, that energy, and that's what it was. It gave them that energy to go back down there and do something that nobody really ever thought they would have to do and dig out their own and try to find people alive. That helped people. It gave them that energy to do it, because they knew whatever the end result was they were going to be appreciated. That was even the first night.

So I kind of remembered that, and when I went home I told my husband, "You just won't believe it. People just came out." I don't know where people came from. The west side is not that populated. They did.

That was really very important, and it was very important emotionally for a lot of people who saw it and for people who were going down to the hot area, as they traveled the west side, was the biggest roadway that everybody used

to get down to the site.

So it was everybody going down there who I think felt the importance of their job and that people appreciated what they were doing. How bad it was, they appreciated you no matter what.

That was just one thing I wanted to add, how the public I think boosted up morale.

That's about it.

Q. Thank you very much, Chief.

A. You're welcome.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This interview is concluding at 1038 hours.

File No. 9110103

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC LOUIS COOK

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17th, 2001. The time now is 721 hours a.m.

my name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. This morning I'm doing an interview with --

PARAMEDIC COOK: Paramedic Louis Cook, Division 2, ALS coordinator.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for this interview is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center task force.

Q. Louie, we'd just like to ask you to give us your account of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. That day I started my tour at 6 a.m. I was in my office with Chief Basile, when he came out and announced that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. He got this information over his beeper. We all kind of just shrugged our shoulders and thought very little of it. Put on the news, the TV, to see whatever news station was on and saw the north tower burning.

We looked at each other and decided

that since this looks like it was going to be a big job, we loaded up our equipment into the car and we started responding to the location.

We went through Queens into Manhattan and down the FDR Drive to the World Trade Center. We parked the vehicle somewhere around West Street, I'm thinking between Albany and Cedar.

Q. Can you just mark that with a number 1 on the map?

A. Sure. I'm pretty sure it was like right around there where we had parked the car.

I do remember seeing Chief Carrasquillo with his aide in front of us parking. I remember seeing Chief Hirth and his aide, and I remember seeing Roger Moore of operations there. They were in the car together.

Q. When you responded with Chief Basile, who else was with you?

A. Just the chief and I. We were alone.

We parked the car, geared up, took our equipment and started towards what was the -- from what I understand to be the initial interagency command post. It was across the street on West Street in front of I believe -- it

was like between one and two number World Trade, give or take. You had a very good view of number one. We saw number two and number three, actually.

We walked up West Street northbound to get to the command post, and there I remember looking to my right and seeing an aircraft landing gear tire. I remember we were walking up, we were zigzagging through bodies and body parts. I just remember the smell of it being like a butcher shop with all the bodies around. I remember smelling that distinctly.

I remember Basile turning around, looking at me, and just telling me, "Louis, don't look around. Just let's get to where we've got to go."

So we got to the command post, and I saw Chief Kowalczyk, who was -- I believe he was the major response chief for the evening, and some other EMS chiefs. I don't recall who was there. I can't remember the faces right now. I do remember him distinctly telling -- stating to us before we even got within ten feet of the command post and saying, "Jimmy take tower one."

So we just immediately turned around and started walking across West Street to tower one. I remember a lot of debris falling from the southwest side, a lot of fire coming down, a lot of parts, a lot of debris and some bodies, some body parts.

We went into the lobby to establish a forward command in the lobby command post. I remember running into Chief Pfeifer, the 1st Battalion chief from the Fire Department. I remember seeing him. We got to the command post, and we started to formulate matching plans. It was another fire chief, a deputy. There was a Port Authority police officer of higher rank in a white shirt, a sergeant. There was a New York City police officer there, I believe a sergeant. We all decided what was going to happen.

Chief Basile asked me to find another egress out of number One World Trade Center. He wanted me to find a safe way if I could get civilians out and aided out if there was a way, even if it was covered, would be perfect.

I went to the Port Authority sergeant and I asked him -- I needed a cop who was

familiar with number one. He tapped some cop and told him, "Go with him and take him where he needs to go."

I was going around in the lobby, and I was making a circle of the lobby. I wanted to see exactly what entrances and egresses were in the lobby area. I was going to go up to the mezzanine, and at some point I saw another elevated portion of stairs that went up to a landing and looked like it went over West Street.

I asked the police officer where does this go, and he told me this was the north bridge to World Financial Center. It's covered and it goes over West Street, comes out to number one, and you can get out through number one to Vesey Street. That's this north bridge right here, pedestrian bridge.

Thinking that since this was covered and away from the side where debris was falling, I figured it best I should investigate this being a safer area to get people out of. It just seemed like a good idea at the time.

I made it up onto the -- I guess you call it the concourse level, the mezzanine level,

and onto the foot bridge when I started to hear -- I thought I heard an explosion of some sort, but I kind of dismissed it. I figured, ah, it's just something burning upstairs. I really didn't think of what was going on.

Okay. I start going across this pedestrian bridge. I'm the only one on this bridge. I'm walking across it, and then I just remember feeling a rumble and hearing this rumbling sound that was really intense. It actually shook my bones.

I turned around to look for the cop, and the cop was gone. I don't know where the hell he went. I didn't know which way to go. I knew number one was on fire. I didn't know which way to go because I thought now the facade or something from number one was coming down, feeling that this rumble was going on.

So I ran. I started to run across the pedestrian bridge, and I got about halfway there when a lot of major debris was hitting the ground, really hitting the ground. You can feel it -- it shook your bones, the things hitting the ground, the rumbling. It was extremely loud.

I remember everything went black. All the windows -- because there are windows on both sides of this walkway -- started to implode in on me, and ceiling tiles -- they had beautiful ceiling tiles in this thing. I think they were mosaics whatever. They just started falling on top of me.

I made it to about halfway, and I couldn't run anymore because of all of this stuff hitting. I decided just to lay against the column and just hold on, because there was nowhere else to go.

It was black. I had some stuff coming in the window, some debris coming in the window on me, and I just waited there until it all stopped, which it felt like forever. Once it all stopped, you couldn't breathe because all the dust. There was just an incredible amount of dust and smoke. It seemed to linger. It didn't seem to settle. It just stayed that way.

When the rumbling stopped, I got up, got out from all the junk, and I started walking -- I kept going across the bridge. I couldn't see, so I hugged the wall that I was

next to and I just kept walking and I just kept my hand on the wall so I knew where I was. I was trying to feel in front of me to make sure nothing was going to be collapsing and there were no holes or voids to fall in.

I kept going straight. I got to the end where World Financial Center is, and everything was locked. The windows were still intact. The doors -- the security bolts were intact. So it was locked. I was kind of trapped in there.

I turned around. I can start seeing a little bit now. I decided, well, I could see a little bit down the hall and I'm going to have to go back now because I can't go out this way. I have nothing to break these windows out with.

As I went, I came across this painter's stuff, a cart and it looks like they were setting up to do some paint work or something. I found some painter's rags. I put the rag to my face. They had a jug like a gallon jug of water. I picked that up. I hosed my face off, and I gargled and spit. I took the jug with me, and I started walking back down.



Really I had nowhere to go. I got back to number one, where I met Chief Pfeifer and his aide. I remember that distinctly, because I know Chief Pfeifer's brother. They look very similar.

Q. At this time did you know where Chief Basile was?

A. No. I was totally away from him. My radio was the fire portable, and for a while it was quiet and then there was a lot of transmissions of maydays. I didn't want to come up on a mayday because I didn't feel I was trapped. I didn't want to interfere with somebody else getting rescued, so I didn't want to come up on the radio.

I didn't know where he was. I had no idea what had gone on. I just knew some -- there was a structural collapse of some sort. I had no idea of what was down, where it was.

I got probably halfway back again to where I originally had to stop, give or take -- I don't know, back between the two. I caught Chief Pfeifer and his aide. I gave him the jug of water, his aide, because he was covered in white powder. He wiped and gargled and rinsed off his

face.

I think I asked Chief Pfeifer what happened to the command post, where is everybody, and he didn't have an answer. So I turned around and I just tagged on with him because for no other reason than there's safety in numbers, I guess.

We turned around, went back to World Financial. I think the aide had some kind of tool with him. He either had a Halligan or he had an officer's tool or something, and he broke the window out of one of the doors. We got into the lobby.

On the side of the lobby, there were two escape stairs that had a panic button door at the bottom. The dust was really heavy in there because it was below us and it was more concentrated than was up by us.

So he broke it out, and I didn't know where else to go so we went out underneath the pedestrian bridge where you could see number two had been totally down. You could just see it. You walked out into this sea of paper and debris and dust that was like to me -- I'm a short guy.

It was almost up to my knees. I was kicking this stuff. I just remember looking and seeing number two and, holy shit, look at this. I had no idea why number two collapsed.

I asked Chief Pfeifer, "Do you know what happened to the command post?" He looked at me. He got up on his radio. I guess there was another fire command post set up. He reported in his position, and he reported he was with me. He didn't know how to report me. He said, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm 62 alpha," and he reported that to the fire command post over his radio.

I don't know where he went. We stood up, because I started heading into number one back across West Street. It was like all this debris and all this stuff. I really had to reorient myself now because I kind of knew where I was but I couldn't tell where I was because nothing looked really the same. Geographically I had an idea where I was, but nothing looked right.

So I waited a little while. I was making my way into number one again, and there was a problem getting into number one where we

went through, because debris had come down across that side.

I remember seeing two civilians on an EMS stretcher and some EMS equipment. The guy ran up and looked at me and said, "Where do you want me to put this stuff?" I looked at him. I'm like, "Right here. There's nothing to do with this." The guy was like, "Oh, I don't know what to do." I was like, "There's nothing to do. Just don't go in the collapse zone. Just go back that way." I pointed him north up West Street.

They were out of masks. They couldn't find masks. They were rifling in the tech bag. So I gave them my shears and cut the stretcher sheet for masks and then they took off.

I made it to one. I couldn't get back into one. I started and went around number one, because I didn't know which way to get in now. I went towards the collapse zone, because I figured, seeing what it was and even though it was down -- this sounds off the wall. I would try to find another way to get into one to get to Basile. I'm not going to raise him on this radio because he has EMS portable, I have the fire

portable.

I'm trying to get in, I'm trying to get back, and people are running up to me. They see the blue shirt. They're looking for direction, EMTs, guys I never saw before. They wanted direction. My response to them was not to go into the collapse zone. I told everybody that I encountered. They're running up with all kinds of equipment and junk and SAEDs.

Go back to Vesey and West and wait on orders. Don't go into the collapse zone. I don't know what's going on over there. Just wait there so I know where you are. We'll get everybody there. These guys just -- I don't know where they went after that.

I was trying to get back into one. I'm somewhere in between one and two, and I start feeling that rumble again, start hearing the noise. I didn't look up. I figured I've been through this once. I know what's coming now.

I started running north on West Street. Stuff just kept hitting it seemed like right behind me. I got to past where I was. Somewhere along I passed one of the tactical trucks from

the fire side, tac 1 or 2. I remember seeing a guys shoes there. I kept running past everything. I remember not seeing a lot of people. It felt like I was alone.

I was running, and stuff was coming down. This time fire was coming down, because I could feel the heat. I grabbed a firefighter's turnout coat that just seemed to be in front of me. I grabbed it. I threw it over my shoulders. I didn't make it much further than that. I ended up diving down next to some kind of truck. I think it was an ambulance, a van ambulance, of somebody's.

I just waited there. I just covered up. This stuff was really hitting the ground. The heavy stuff was really hitting the ground. It was somewhere -- it was shy of Vesey. It really wasn't very far. I didn't make it to the corner. I just waited there for everything to stop. It was really hot, because this time there was fire. I know that because my neck burned. I was just waiting.

I just laid there. I didn't hear anybody else. I didn't hear anything else. I

just laid there and tried to figure out where the hell I was going to go. I thought I was going to die. Once everything stopped and kind of settled, it was quiet.

I knew I was facing Vesey Street, and I didn't know which way to go. I just stayed there. I couldn't breathe. I'm breathing in my shirt. I didn't know where to go. I start -- laying there, I'm not dead. It's all quiet. So I figured, all right, now you've got to find a way out of here because you're going to suffocate.

So I start crawling -- because I can't see, I start crawling and doing one of these, sweeps in front of me so I don't hit anything. Somebody yells, "Is there anybody out there?" I was like, "Yeah. It's Cook." I yelled out, "It's Paramedic Cook." The response was, "Yeah, this is Chief" -- McCarthy or McNally. I want to say McNally. McCarthy.

So I yelled, "Just keep yelling. I'll find you." He started just calling back and forth his name. I remember crawling up to him, and I think I grabbed his arm. I grabbed him by

the arm. He reached out and grabbed me. We latched onto each other's arms. We were crawling, and we stood up.

He said to me, "All right. As long as we make it to the water, we'll be all right." I was like, okay. I had an idea where the water is. You still can't see it because it's dark as a mother. You can't breathe. It's so heavy with smoke and dust and ash.

I can't breathe. I have, for lack of a better term, dust impaction in my ears, in my nose. I was coughing it out of my mouth. It felt like I had a baseball in my mouth. I was just picking it out with my fingers.

I get up. We start going. We make it to about -- on Vesey Street. I'm looking at the map now, and I see number Three World Financial, the American Express. We got past there. On the north side of the street there's a bunch of shops. Here I just kind of fell across the wall where it was clear out and waited.

Somebody ran up -- I don't know. Somebody had water, pitchers of water. They came up. They splashed us with it in the face. I



remember coughing. He was coughing. I remember it was so bad I was coughing, I threw up everything out of my throat.

I got up, and I didn't see anybody I knew. I went back towards the collapse zone, past the AMEX building. There were a bunch of EMS people there. I remember they were all standing there with their helmets on: our guys, Lenox Hill guys, a bunch of other people. They were setting up some kind of triage area.

I remember a crew was loading up a stretcher with equipment. I walked up to them to find out who they were, where they were going. They looked at me, and they were going to start to treat me as a patient. I'm like, "Listen, don't bother with me. I'm ambulatory and fine. There's nothing you can do for me."

The guys are all gearing up. They're loading these stretchers up with everything, with life-packs, some SAEDs, suction units, and they started marching into the collapse zone. I had to grab one guy. The kid was brand-new. Everything was brand-new.

I said, "Are you out of your mind?"

Stay right here. Don't go into that fucking collapse zone. You don't know what's going on. I know we've lost a building. I don't know what's going on. I know there's fire over there. It's real dangerous. You cannot go there. Stay here."

One of the guys turned around and said to me -- he was a medic. He knew my name. I think it was Raoul Perez. He said to me, "Louie, you don't understand. We've got to go in there. Our people are dying in there." I turned around, and I remember saying to him, "You're out of your fucking mind. Everyone's dead who was over there. It's unsafe. I don't know where to send you guys or what to do for you guys. Don't go there."

They all just kind of blew me off and said they were formulating a plan. So I told them, "If you're going to send somebody, two guys go with a tech bag and that's it. One guy stand by the corner to watch them and you guys stay here. Don't go past the line of sight. If you're going to go and just go forward to see if there's anybody immediately right there."

They all kind of thought that was a better idea, and they left it at that. I left Raoul, who seemed to be taking kind of charge, one of the medics.

I went back to the collapse looking for Basile. I thought he was dead, because I didn't know where he was and he didn't come up on the radio. I tried to find him. I went back towards number one. There's nothing left of number one. There was nothing left of number two. I didn't see anybody else I knew.

I got back to one. I just looked at -- I just remember looking at both of them, and I thought -- I saw how bad it was and I was like, there's no way they got out of that frigging collapse. There's no way they get out.

So I walked out and tried to see if there's anything standing that I could get into to see if I could find him. There's nobody there. I came back around to find those guys, the medics and the EMTs that I left.

I ran into Mark Stone. Mark looked at me. I didn't know what to do for myself. He came over and gave me a big hug. He started

calling somebody, I think. He started washing my face off again.

Then I saw Richie Zarillo, the guy who's (inaudible). He looked at me and as he's walked around of the building and he had his helmet on and he looked at me and -- I don't know what he saw, but his face dropped. I just remember seeing his eyes light up and his jaw fall when he saw me. He's like oh, my God. He was like totally, unbelievably upset. He was like, "Are you all right, what happened, oh, my God."

Then he asked about Basile. I said I don't know. I don't know where the hell he is. He was in one, we got separated, I went back, I can't find a way to get to him. He was like, "All right. Just stay here." He gave me a bottle of water or some shit, something in his pocket. I just remember rinsing my mouth and spitting and just living with that for a few minutes, sitting against the wall.

I remember seeing -- at that point I think I saw Sal Sangeniti, Pete Carrasquillo's aide now. He was leaning against the wall, and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I said, "Are you all right?" He's like, "Well, I just ran my ass off and whatever."

He said to me -- he looked at me -- "(Inaudible) and I'm having some chest pains." So I'm thinking to myself, oh, great, this guy's going to have an MI here, fuck. I said, "Sal, what do you want? Come on? I started telling him. Come on. We'll get you help. We'll get you taken care of." He said, "No, just leave me alone." He's like, "It will pass. I just want to be left alone."

So I just stayed with him for a while and didn't say anything. I don't remember talking about anything. We just kind of stood there and looked. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He said something funny about leaving to be something ridiculous like, I don't know, opening a deli or something silly. I kind of chuckled at that.

Q. I can picture Sal. I can picture him

so vividly.

A. I had to chuckle at that, because I'm like you know, you're right.

Richie turned around. He stayed with me. He won't let me alone. He won't leave me go. He's standing next to me. Mark Stone I think went off, because I remember saying the MERV is close by because I thought I heard the generator, but I'm not sure.

I remember a few minutes later Richie's face -- he turned around and looked at me and he said, "Oh, there you are." I turned around. It was Basile. We hugged each other. I was grateful that he was there. He looked at me and wanted to know if I was all right. He hugged me. He said, "I thought you were dead." I told him, "I thought you were dead too." After that we didn't say much more.

We kind of got back to work. We brushed ourselves off, went into this hotel up on North End Avenue. There was a triage set-up going on up there. There were people getting triaged and treated, things going on. EMS chiefs

started to filter in. I remember seeing Gombo. I remember seeing Pascale. I remember seeing Pete Carrasquillo. I was happy to see Pete.

I remember washing myself off in this decorative fountain in the lobby. I was very, I guess, from fiberglass or whatever because I wasn't char burned; I was red. So I just washed myself off, dunked my face and my head.

We went into this conference room or towards the conference room, and we stopped in the hall. We had to formulate a plan what to do. I just remember the discussion. I know probably it wasn't my place, but I don't care. I threw in my two cents with things that were being said.

The idea that I thought was very good was creating two casualty collection points and not doing anything at the site, because there's really nothing for our people to do right in the pit. They're not trained to handle this, let them stay on the periphery and let's have some outer collection sites for people.

So Basile gets told by Gombo to set up at the south ferry, and we just kind of take our stuff and we started walking out of the hotel and

we start walking from North End Avenue. We looked. From where we are you can kind of see the pit and you can see the debris and everything going on.

He looked at me and said, "Louis, there's no way we're going to make it to the south ferry from here walking. It's going to be a while." So I said to him, "Well, we'll have to find us some alternate transportation." We were outside this harbor here, the North Cove.

I looked down, and there's these large vessels, these sight-seeing boats. There's a guy up on one of them, a deckhand of some sort, and he's cleaning the dust off one boat. I look at him. Basile doesn't know what I'm up to. I go down the finger planks of the dock, and I whistle up at him and I yell at him. He turned around and looks at me. I said, "Your boat and motor work now?" He looked at me and he said, "Yeah." I said, "Let's go."

He came down and he took us down another dock, and he put us on a boat, on a rigid hull inflatable, one of those Coast Guard type boats, about a 20 footer. He cranks it up. We



told him, we have to go to the south ferry, and we have to get there now. So the guy just fires up the boat, and we go.

We make it out into the Hudson, and we're going down the Hudson River. We're looking back, and all we see is this big cloud of smoke and dust. We're just like in shock, how could this happen. We couldn't believe what happened.

I'm at the bow of the boat, and the chief is sitting at the console where the pilot is piloting the boat. I looked up -- I don't know what made me look at this, but I thought it was funny because one of the pontoons in the back of the boat was flat. Something must have hit it and flattened it.

I looked at it and I laughed. I said "Oh, great. We survived all this and now we're going to drown." He looked at me, and Basile's face lit up. He smiled and he's like, "You know, you're a pisser, Louis. You just do the funniest shit."

So we make it to the south ferry, and the boat dies. They get me up to the ladder to climb up onto the dock, and I tell the chief,

"Just stay. I'll get your dock line. Don't worry about it." The boat dies, and they start drifting out into the harbor.

I pick up all these life savers that they have laying on the dock with some line. I throw it to him and of course the line gets all tangled. So I just let it go. They were laughing because I was cursing. A Coast Guard boat comes by and I start waving at him, and they're waving at me like I'm saying hello. Schmucks.

So they get the hint that the boat is adrift. They come back in. The guy -- the prop was fouled on the boat. So he cleared it to get the boat started, brings it back up to the dock, and Basile climbs up the ladder, which is funny to see a guy his size climbing up the ladder.

We just went to work and set up the south ferry. We got there, and there were off-duty EMS people doing some election detail stuff, I remember because they were wearing election shirts. We got there --

Q. Do you remember who any of them were, Louis?

A. Okay, I want to say, yeah, Joan Hill Gardner. I know she was one. I think Bill Haigney was another. For the life of me, I can't remember. But they kept coming in.

(Interruption.)

A. We were in this place. The Coast Guard was there. They were assigned to the station at the terminal. I remember seeing a lot of EMS people coming in. The ferry was coming back and forth. They stopped it on the Staten Island side. I remember speaking with the dock master to hold the ferry for the moment.

Then MEU showed up with a truck, and it was Richie (inaudible). We started setting up the folding cots and started setting up all kinds of equipment, like we do in MASH tents. It was just a lot of activity going on.

I grabbed a Coast Guardsman. The petty officer and I grabbed him and said, "Where's the commander of the station?" He said, "I'll get him for you." He got the commander of the station. He came over. We introduced ourselves. I told him what we were doing.

I told him I needed to know if they

were armed. He was like, "Why?" I said, "We're going to need armed guards in front of this place because I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know if we're going to be -- if there's a potential for us being attacked or not or anything's going to happen. I need armed guards."

He looked at me and he said, "This is an unarmed station. I can recall a patrol boat that's armed, but I don't have guys with guns." I was like all right. I asked him if they were trained as EMTs, and he said half the guys at this assignment were EMTs.

So I told him I wanted to choke off the ferry terminal and have people who want to seek treatment to come into a choke point to come upstairs in the ferry terminal, be triaged, treated and we'll get them out. I don't want just civilians wandering in, uninjured.

He agreed with me. He put his people into action. We had the ferry still out. I asked him, "Is there any way we can get in touch with the ferry? I need to have the ferry on our frequency all together. I need to have them."

He said, "What do you need that for?" I said, "If we have to move all our patients, I'm taking them over to Staten Island. I will bring the resources from Staten Island with the ferry. At the very least if we have a lot of fatalities, we'll send them over there too."

He's said, okay. He said, "Let me get the dock master." He got the dock master. He got the dock master's extra radio, and we started listening up and we started communicating with each other. They brought the ferry back, which had people from Staten Island University Hospital or one of those hospitals over there. There were nurses, physicians, EMTs, firefighters off duty, cops off duty, because they were coming like with half uniform, half equipment and stuff.

Some of the firemen stopped who were CFRD and said if they weren't needed here they were going to go over to the collapse. We kind of pointed them the way to the collapse.

We had some units show up. I remember seeing two paramedics from here, Kevin Kelleher and Felix Marquez. They showed up.

Basically we just waited for patients,

and we really didn't get any. I remember at some point Dr. Cherson came. I remember seeing Manny Delgado. I remember seeing at some point Jerry Bacchus. I remember seeing Phil Ashby. At some point McCracken and Cronin showed up.

I remember McCracken was getting an abuterol treatment. Basile was needling him. That was pretty amazing. He kind of zinged him a little bit. It was funny.

I remember seeing Roger Ahee. I can't for the life of me now figure out who else I saw. I know I saw volunteers showing up and volunteer ambulances.

I started seeing the exodus of civilians. It was funny. I say exodus because when we were coming down in the boat around the horn of Manhattan, I remember seeing boats coming in, all these boats, tugboats. Every boat imaginable in the harbor was coming in at a full clip. I remember them hitting the sea walls.

Wherever they could stop and take people on, they were taking them. I just remember seeing that. I remember tugboats just coming right to the wall with deck hands and just

pulling people. You could see some people bleeding, some people were injured. Some people were like totally lost. Wall Streeters with like half their clothes and no briefcase and stuff. I remember seeing stuff like that. They were just getting on the boats and going. I remember seeing that.

I remember seeing tugboats and I remember seeing fire boats coming in. I remember seeing one of the harbor boats, the cops, loaded with cops. It was just amazing to see these guys coming by boat. People were just leaving on boats.

The civilians would come to the ferry, and they were all -- some of them were injured; some of them were not injured. Those that were injured just kind of came up, got wrapped up, got irrigated, whatever, went home. The ferry came back, and they held it for a while.

Then since we weren't getting any patients, we cut it free. We said, all right, if you feel it's secure enough, take the people who want to go to Staten Island across. They started their route back and forth again, but they

understood we would call them immediately if we needed them.

I remember one trip coming back from the ferry, because I took over the dock master's office as a command post. I remember Billy Olsen coming over on the ferry. He said he had a skating rink on the other side set up and iced over for a morgue. He set that up. I didn't know what to say about that. I just let it go. There was nothing I could tell him.

That was it. We stayed there the day, saw next to nobody as far as patient volume, then we -- sometime during the day -- I'm assuming it was the latter part of the afternoon, I saw Mark Steffens. He finally came up, and he was a wreck. He gave me a big hug. He was glad to see me, and actually I was glad to see him. I didn't know where he was. He told me his story. He was really shaking, I remember.

We got a message we had to go to Chambers and West, there's an interagency meeting happening immediately. So we had to find a way back to get Basile's car, if it was even there. I don't know how the hell we got there. I don't



even know how we got -- I don't think we walked back, but I don't know how we got back to Basile's car, to get his car. I don't know. I don't know how we got from one place to the other.

We were walking up West Street, because we came south -- yeah, it was just a couple blocks away. We went through Whitehall Street. We came south again from the towers. We tried to find the car. It was amazing to see just what was all over the place. Buildings burning without any fire suppression or anything going on.

It was amazing. It was just chaos, just junk and cars crushed. The bodies that I remembered seeing on West Street when we were going up to the command post originally were just kind of like covered up. They were all covered. I remember just thinking where all the bodies are. I'm walking around now and I can't see them.

We found Bobby Brown's car, which was Billy Day's burned. Billy's probably pissed. Nose smashed in pretty well. I crawled and

popped the trunk lid and took his bag and left everything else, personal effects, there.

We just tried to find our car. We found it eventually. It took us a while because everything just didn't resemble what it was. We found it. It was covered in dust and soot. Without exaggerating, a foot and a half of dust on the car. You just couldn't tell whose car was whose. The only way we found it was he said, "I'll try this one," and he stuck the key in there and the cylinder turned. It was ours.

We brushed off the debris and the dust.

(Interruption.)

MS. BASTEDENBECK: We're continuing the interview with Paramedic Louis Cook.

A. We went back around to the south ferry. We picked up Mark Steffens. I was in the car with Chief Basile. I have no idea who else was in the car. I know the car was packed because we were shoulder to shoulder. I can't remember who else was in the car.

So we dropped off some stuff, started up the FDR Drive, got off -- actually the service road of the FDR Drive. We came around by 1 Truck

by South Street and I can't think of the cross street, like Beaver or something. We started weaving our way through the streets because we just had no idea where we could get around.

We finally made it up to Chambers and Greenwich. We went up to Chambers and Greenwich through this mess. Driving through this was like nuclear winter with all the dust and everything else. We got to Chambers and Greenwich, and the chief turns around and says, "There's number Seven World Trade. That's the OEM bunker." We had a snicker about that. We looked over, and it's engulfed in flames and starting to collapse.

We're kind of caught in traffic and people and things, and everything's going on. We hear over the fire portable, "Everybody evacuate the site. It's going to collapse." Mark Steffens starts yelling, "Get out of here! Get out of here! Get out of here! We've got to go! We've got to go! It's going to collapse."

I turned around, and I piped up real loud and said, "Stay in the frigging car. Roll the windows up. It's pancake collapsing. We'll be fine. The debris will quit and the cloud will

come through. Just stay in the car." We pulled the car over, turned around and just watched it pancake. We had a dust cloud but nothing like it was before.

We ended up, up the street at the command post, and it was a sea of people. For the life of me, I can't tell you who was there. I just don't know. Everyone was chattering and talking about this and about that. No one really had any stories. It was just like business. I just remember that.

He looked at me after the meeting at the interagency meeting. I remember seeing Ron Pfeffer at the command board doing tracking, doing tracking and stuff. I spoke to him for a moment.

That was it. They sent us home later that night from the command post, and we came back the very next morning very early back at the World Trade Center. I came here. I don't remember if Basile picked me up or I took the car. I remember we met up down there. We were there together. I don't remember from there. We stayed for days doing our job.

That's pretty much it. That's pretty much it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to the events prior to 11:00 that morning?

A. There was just so much going on. I speak about it and then something else will pop in my head, things that I can remember.

After the collapse I just had a disturbed feeling that I knew we lost people, a lot of people, EMS people. I started thinking about that and I thought about all my friends that I've known for years.

I started thinking, well, where's my sister, because my sister's a cop. I'm like, great, I don't know where she is, I don't know where anybody is, I don't know what's going on.

It was very, very disturbing. I have no bravado. I've seen plane crashes and all the jobs and stuff. I've never quite seen some of the things there that seem to overwhelm my thoughts.

I don't know what else to say I don't know what else to say. I feel like I haven't really contributed much. It's just a lot, I

guess, a lot of that going on. I really can't think of a lot else.

I don't remember seeing -- I remember seeing some fire officers and I remember seeing Fire Patrol, the guys with the red helmets. It's sad that we lost all those guys. Basile I think at one point said --

(Interruption.)

A. I can't recall anything else. I know Chief Fanning was with us or Chief Galvin was with us at some point at the command post. Actually that's what Chief Basile told me.

That was it. I just really can't remember much. Everything seems like a blur. I get these moments where I remember something. That's about it. I can't really add. I wish I had more information for you.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Okay. This concludes our interview with Paramedic Louis Cook. The time now is 816 a.m.

File No. 9110104

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC STEVEN PILLA

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time is 11:27. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, title and assigned command of the New York City Fire Department in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

PARAMEDIC PILLA: My name is STEVEN Pilla. I'm one of the ALS coordinators for Division 6 EMS.

Q. STEVE, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you please tell me in your own words about the events surrounding that day?

A. Well, let's see, in the morning I got to work like usual. I heard that there was an explosion -- I heard the radio on citywide in the office. So we heard the lieutenant on the scene screaming that he needs every available ambulance.

It was very interesting because I was



at that explosion in '93. I was on the street at that point. I remember when they sent us down there, we turned to citywide. It was a very similar conversation from that lieutenant: Give me everything you've got here. Smoke coming out of the world -- I thought that it was a tape on. They said no, there was an explosion. We turned the TV on. Sure enough, the tower was on fire.

As we're watching the TV, we saw the second plane hit. I'm like, is that another plane that hit? Like God, one could be, two is no longer an accident. The chief rounded us all up, and we started heading down.

Q. Which chief?

A. Chief Pascale.

We took the Henry Hudson Parkway.

Q. Can you just tell me the other personnel that you were with?

A. It was myself; Neil Sweeney, who is vacation relief right now for the other coordinator who is out on refresher; Amedegnato, who is one of the chief's aides here, EMT; Lieutenant Cahill, who was the officer in charge in the division; and Chief Pascale herself.

All five of us got into the car with some equipment and took off down there. We got to the Henry Hudson from Jacobi. We hit a lot of traffic. It was at that point I think they already realized that this was some sort of attack. After getting through barricades and then smooth sailing, to find more barricades. We kept getting delayed getting down there.

We finally get to the end of the West Side Highway. As we turned, we could see both towers on fire. This brought back from '93 when I got there all the smoke coming out, glass breaking and stuff. I had no idea what we were going to face.

As soon as we got there, we just passed one of the walkway bridges just past Stuyvesant High School. There's a walkway bridge. We just passed that, got to Vesey. The chief was saying we have to find the chief, find the command center at West and Vesey.

We see this plume, come down in front of us. Originally I thought basically it was the facade of the building that came down. We made a quick right. I looked behind me. Neil was

driving, I wasn't; I was in the back. I looked behind me. I could see this plume of shit just chasing us. They're looking for a place to park, and I'm going, "Keep going. Keep going. Don't stop." It finally overtook us to the point we couldn't see where we were driving.

We parked the car, and then we got out, got our helmets. We were getting ash and stuff coming onto us, this dark plume. One of the firemen who now works as a medic for one of the private hospitals, he comes out and sees me.

Q. Do you know his name?

A. I'll give it to you later as soon as I --

Q. Okay.

A. He comes out and he goes, "STEVE." I said, "What?" He couldn't find his partner. I'm looking to him and saying to myself, you can't find him? I'm thinking the worst. Then someone else was coming out of the plume. The lieutenant and Neil went to get them and came out.

Then we all had to leave because it was getting darker and darker and stuff was getting bigger and bigger. So we all took off I find out

in different directions. We couldn't find anybody for a while.

We found an ambulance and got some paper masks to wear for the ash. But it was really dark, like nighttime, just waiting until this stuff goes over. I remember after the darkness went away I could see the sun coming through the sky. I guess the building was no longer blocking the sun.

We walked around. I believe now it was close to water. It was towards the American Express building, I'd say, or Merrill Lynch, one of these buildings.

Q. Okay.

A. The ambulances started coming around from the side. They just filled with all the debris from the tower. The MERV took off with its doors open, the steps on it, bouncing down the street. I was like, hmm, this is not a good thing.

We managed to set up some triage, get ALS up. Then we found the chief, found the lieutenant, found Amedegnato and Neil and tried to get the ambulances together, around the

corner, staged. I remember on one ambulance there was an hysterical EMT in the back that couldn't find her partner.

Q. Do you remember who that was?

A. I don't know who she was. She was looking for her partner Patrick.

Q. Do you know Patrick who?

A. Sorry.

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. So how she's looking for her partner.

She wanted to go back. I told her -- someone was with her. I said, "You've got to hold her here. Hold her. Don't let her go back." Obviously we had a big disaster. Like ten minutes later her partner walked up. I said, "Go hug your partner. She misses you."

We set up a triage area in the lobby of the building. I'm still trying to figure out what building we were in. I believe it was the Winter Garden building. That's the only one I can think of. So we're in that building. People started coming in filled with ash and choking and respiratory problems. But no one was really hurt. So we were taking care of that.

Then they said the building was coming down, the other tower. We need to leave. So we all took off. The people who I was taking care of who couldn't walk got out the door before I did. It was unbelievable.

You could hear the roar. Outside you could hear the roar of the building coming down. It just slowly got faster and faster. It was unbelievable. It was like a freight train.

You go around the corner only to be greeted by another plume of smoke from the other building. So now ambulances were taking off, and one ambulance stopped and said, "STEVE, get in the ambulance." I jumped in, and we waited there until it settled. No big debris came towards us. It was just the dust and dirt. When that kind of settled, you could see the light again.

I popped out, went back into the same building, which wasn't as damaged, and did triage again. There were more and more people in there. There was a girl with a broken leg. She got blown just from the force of the ash. She kept going down from the force of the ash. We ended up treating her. She was stable.

There was a chief in there, a fire chief, with a broken shoulder and bloody nose. I was going down the line triaging people. They were upset, they were bent. People with no shoes on I guess from running out of the tower.

A fire chief comes over to me and says, "Listen, son. There was a terrorist attack. This building's next, because they know they're going to start attacking other buildings." He had a very good point there, because you're always waiting for the next attack. This is a terrorist act.

So I got my chief and decided to go into Stuyvesant High School. At that point I was going to get the fire chief out, to an ambulance, get him out of the way. There was a Port Authority cop who crashed on us. He was doing fine, the next minute he had no blood pressure. We got him out to an ambulance.

Q. What kind of injuries did he have?

A. Nothing obvious, but it must have been the shock from the whole thing, or an internal thing is possible. Maybe mashed, he might have been squished, hit by something, and not even

know it. We got him in an ambulance and got him out to a hospital.

Q. Do you know who his name was?

A. Maybe this happened -- the time period is like within an hour. It's amazing. On the map I see now we actually ran towards the other buildings instead of running away from everything.

At that point we're getting everything together, and now we're going to move to Stuyvesant High School. Somebody comes in and says there's a gas leak, there's explosions going on, we have to evacuate.

So now we're all running out of the building again. The 20 people I'm treating again beat me to the door. I have no idea where these 20 people are. Someone is running around with a triage cage around their neck.

So we run out. You try not to hear the explosions in the background, things just blowing up; vehicles, I guess, that were on fire from the debris or if there were gas leaks. You could hear them getting closer and closer, so there was a good possibility there were gas explosions.



I get into Stuyvesant High School and the dust settles. You calm down. You figure you're safe now. Somebody comes in yelling there are gas explosions coming towards the high school, we need to evacuate.

At this point you have hundreds of people running into this high school. Now you're evacuating again. Once you get yourself together, you had to run. You just kept doing that for like the first hour. We just kept running until I could see the buildings. We're about this big. About an inch. Okay. Now everybody's safe. What do they do, the rule of thumb. But I used my pinky, though.

We stayed there on the corner for the longest time. Sure enough, people were still coming out of that portion with ash on them and problems breathing. I took my oxygen tank with me. It's like my safety blanket. Everywhere I was going I was giving oxygen to people to get themselves back together. There were 20 people just stopping, giving them oxygen, and going to the next one.

A Port Authority cop came out. Their

suits are dark blue. He was white. His whole suit was pure white. They set up their own triage area in another high school, one of the colleges.

Q. Across the street from --

A. No, it's down the block. So they're there for the longest time, because they needed some supplies, needed ambulances. The radios were not working. We had a radio with us. But I knew there was a triage area and transport area two blocks from there. They had like ten ambulances. Another triage and transport area down the other road with MERVs and ambulances. So we were basically running back and forth where they need an ambulance, playing gofer. Somebody just needed a gofer to go back and forth.

We went upstairs to the (inaudible). It was in the auditorium, like a gym. They had doctors that had come in from all over, doing treatment. Great. Some EMTs showed up from Hazollah. They were in there. A lot of walking wounded. No one with real life-threatening injuries. But then again I kind of figured that because all the life-threatening injuries were in

the rubble.

So strange we had all these triage areas set up and we were getting dribs and drabs. There were no real patients. You think people would get out of the muck; right? It was like walking wounded or dead. That was basically it. There was no one or few critical. When the first building came down, we did. When the second building came down, it was even less.

It was kind of strange, we had a tugboat set to go to Jersey with a frequency how to get in touch with them. We had doctors at another triage area. But there were no patients.

(Interruption.)

A. Then it was about 5:00, because I was getting hungry. We were eating oatmeal cookies and watered-down Gatorade from the Salvation Army and the Red Cross. They were great. They had plenty of food. But we were getting hungry.

We walked back. We didn't do any further because building number seven was coming down. That was another problem, to wait for building seven to come down, because that was unsecure. It was about 5:30 that building came

down.

Again another plume of smoke. Again if you got too close you had to start running again. In the plumes there was like big debris, small debris, not to mention whatever contaminants were in it.

We finally got to ground zero, Chambers and West. I met Al, who was in refresher who was now sitting down there with an ambulance full of patients. He got sent to the pharmacy. So I was standing there for a while, looking at the MERV. Again, there was not a lot of patients coming in, just people coming in with ash in their eyes. That was it.

We didn't do much, to tell you the truth. I was just walking around aimlessly, because there was nothing much to do. You sat there. You were amazed. You just lost two buildings and possibly 50,000 people at most, if not maybe about 10,000 if they got the buildings evacuated. You just watched 10,000 people die. Unbelievable.

I remember going back into the high school and got some food. At that point it

really hit, I'm hungry and thirsty. I get headaches when I don't eat, so I was getting this bad headache.

The only thing I remember is walking around and it's like five inches of ash and paperwork from everyone's office. Some were burnt, so you imagine where that paperwork came from. People's personal memos, financial records, everything, on the street.

It was about 7, 7:30 we finally contacted the chief. We had lost her. We didn't know where she was. She didn't know where we were. She came back to ground zero, and we met her. She got all of us together, and we went back to our car to get back here.

We got back to the car. It was filled with ash. It was like it snowed. We didn't even wipe the car off before you got in the car. It was ash; it wasn't even snow. It even managed to get inside the car. It was totally unreal.

I remember somebody saying to everybody, "Don't forget to fill out an exposure form when you get back." God only knows what was in that. You could feel the fiberglass on your

arms. You knew it was like pulverized glass and fiberglass. Everything was pulverized.

We got back here and chilled out, went home, hugged my wife, ditched my clothes, and came back to try to see what to do the next day. I've been in the office since. I've never gone back down to ground zero. Some day I do want to go back there just to actually physically see where it was, where I was running to. In the whole maze, you're just running and running and you don't see where you're going.

I know when I ran out the building the building was falling. I looked to the right, and the plume was coming towards us. I looked to the left, and I said I can't go back that way because the building (inaudible). I can't go this way, to the right; I can't go left. I hope my helmet works. That's all I've got left. From the looks of things, it's not going to work too well. So that's when an ambulance pulled up and said hop in.

That's about it. I spent the rest of my time trying to get myself back together again. Today is the first day I actually got myself on a

normal schedule. It's over a month.

A plane passes over, you hear -- the only other plane -- I'm in Westchester. The airport closes at 12 midnight it's 2:00 in the morning, and I hear this roar of a plane go by. It's the same rumble. I was dreaming about this building falling down, with the smoke and all.

That's my story.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this in regards to the events that happened prior to 12 noon?

A. No, I pretty much gave you every detail I could imagine.

Q. Thank you very much for conducting this interview with me.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 1147 hours.

File No. 9110105

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF JAMES BASILE

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17th, 2001. The time is 839 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck from the New York Fire Department. I'm here to conduct an interview with the following individual.

CHIEF BASILE: Chief JAMES BASILE, B-A-S-I-L-E, EMS operations, EMS Division 2 commander.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston from the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center disaster task force.

Q. Chief, I'm just going to ask you if you can recount the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. I first became aware of the World Trade Center incident from my staff, who was watching the morning news. They had turned on the news, and we had seen the original plane had struck tower number one of the World Trade Center. At that point we started to monitor the radio activities here, the CAD job.

Within a few minutes, the other building was struck. At that point I called the

Citywide Dispatch Supervisor, informing them we were available if necessary. I felt at that point based on the magnitude of the incident that I should respond.

So I responded from Division 2's office with paramedic Louis Cook. We traveled Pelham Parkway onto the Hutchison River Parkway to the Whitestone Bridge, where we had seen the magnitude of the incident outplayed firsthand. From the Whitestone Bridge, we entered the Whitestone Expressway onto the Van Wyck Expressway onto the Long Island Expressway, where we started to take a real perspective of the incident because of the closer we had gotten.

By the time we reached the Queens Midtown Expressway, that perception now before the tunnel, we had seen how big it really was. My greatest fear was additional attacks at that point, knowing past history with terrorists and how they operate.

By the time we got to the tunnel, there must have been 20-25 vehicles behind us, a few cars in front of us. Chief Hirth was in front of us. Chief Carrasquillo was also in front of us.

We got into the tunnel. We had clear access into the tunnel and onto 34th Street and the FDR Drive.

We traveled the FDR Drive, came through the tunnel down in lower Manhattan and out onto the West Side Highway. I parked the vehicle at approximately West Street and I believe it was Albany to Carlisle. It might have been Albany.

Q. Can you just indicate with the number 1?

A. Carlisle to Rector or Albany. I'm going to put a 1 here.

I exited the vehicle with all my appropriate gear and walked up to the command post, which was located adjacent to the Winter Garden theater at that point. I met with Chief Jerry Gombo and Chief Walter Kowalczyk and was directed to go into the lobby of number One World Trade Center at that point. The buildings are still up and intact.

Louis Cook and I went in together. We found out it was very dangerous entering the premise, that there was numerous parts of the building and other foreign bodies being thrown

around from the higher floors.

We entered the lobby. There I met Citywide Truck Commander Joseph Callan, Fire Division 1 Commander Chief Hayden and Fire Battalion 1 Joe Pfeifer, Safety Battalion Chief Stephen King, Father Judge, and OEM Port Authority officials in the command post within the lobby of number one.

We were looking to effect a way of exit for personnel in the building and a place where we could establish treatment sites. I advised the incident commander that was in the Trade Center with me that access from the front of the building was inappropriate and that we should look for other exits. That's when I sent Louis Cook with a Port Authority cop to find a different access for civilians and public safety personnel to come in on.

We were operating in the lobby, and all of a sudden we heard the roar of a jet engine, is what it sounded like. We thought that there was another plane coming into the building. We went from the lobby area into an elevator bank area -- escalators that led into the concourse area. So

there was essentially a wall that we went around from the command post area to the escalator area.

Not two seconds later debris and dust started to come in, and essentially we were just shut down. Everything was dark, pitch-black.

Q. Before the collapse, was the lobby still lit?

A. The lobby was functional. When I first arrived there, there appeared to be a lot of people there. The Port Authority had set up some type of chain to help lead people out. I would say within the last two minutes before building two had fallen that the bulk of the people were out of the lobby and it was essentially just the Fire, Port Authority and OEM personnel with me. The lobby was essentially clear.

Q. Did you go into any of the stairways or did you stay in the lobby?

A. I just stayed in the lobby at that point. We heard the roar of the jet -- what I thought was a jet coming in, and I believe the others did, and we went into the escalator area for shelter.

Everybody got down on the ground.

There was some debris that fell. There was a lot of soot and dust. It was pitch-black. The only light that we had was the handheld lanterns, and there was a photographer, a video crew that was following one of the battalion chiefs, that he provided some light.

All access to the lobby area was cut off, and any egress from that level was cut off. I opted to grab a hold of a Port Authority cop who knew the building well and ask for another way out. We ventured to take the escalator up into the concourse level.

I went up to the concourse level. All the glass had been shattered out at that point. We were able to get out. I saw people starting to come out from the building on the concourse. I met with Fire Battalion Chief Turner and a few other firemen -- I don't know their names -- and assisted in moving patients, civilians, out.

I did some quick treatment of a couple of patients. One gentleman had a severe gash to his forearm. I don't know how, but he had gauze with him. So I wrapped him up. I effectively was able to bring out about 300 civilians from

the building at that point in the matter of, I guess, 12, 15 minutes.

We were helping people over large areas of debris and channelling them, trying to keep them calm, bringing them over to a walkway that led to number Seven World Trade Center.

When the majority of the civilians were out, I waited a few minutes. There was nobody else coming out. I had a feeling, a gut feeling inside that it was time for me to leave. So I started walking. I went over the walking bridge to number seven. I went into the second level or the main lobby of number seven and walked down the escalator.

As I was approaching the corner of West and Vesey, I heard over the radio that the building was leaning. As I was crossing West Street, that's when I heard that jet sound again. I knew that the building was coming down. I made it about -- somewhere between West and North End there was a fence, approximately, I guess, 200 feet or maybe 100 yards away. I decided to use that as a wall to protect myself from any debris, not knowing what the extent of the magnitude was

going to be.

I brought a couple of civilians down with me, a couple of firefighters, I brought them close to the ground. I covered them with my turnout coat with me. I essentially waited and figured that was it, it was all over, because of the proximity to where we were to where the building was.

It went down, got filled with this dust and dirt, debris, again, this cloud. I opened up my eyes. It was total darkness I guess for about two, three minutes. I thought I guess this is what it's like to be dead. Then I heard a woman screaming next to me, and I said I guess we're still all here. So that was good.

We waited until we were able to see a little light. I was able to get the woman up. We went into a bagel store which was located at North End and Vesey, where we took some water. I gave her water and a couple other people. At the back of the deli counter in the kitchen area, they had like a little portable shower, I guess a dish shower. We hosed each other down.

I went into a building off of River



Terrace, I believe, and Vesey where a lot of the chiefs had regrouped. I met with Chief Kowalczyk, Gombo. I don't remember the other chiefs that were there at the time. Essentially we were trying to put a plan together of what we were going to do.

I was directed at that point to set up a treatment site over at the ferry terminal. Louie Cook and I, we wound up finding each other. I thought he was a goner too. I didn't know where he was. I thought it was all over.

We met, and we took a few minutes out. I told Louis, I said, "We're not going back to the West Side Highway. We're going to walk around if necessary." So we were walking down North End. We were down by the yacht harbor. Louie Cook saw a boatsmate who was sweeping debris off of one of the boats.

He called out to the boatsmate and asked him, "Do you have a dingy?" The guy said, "Yeah, what do you need?" He said, "Well, we need a ride out to the ferry terminal." He said, "Okay." So we wound up having a zodiac inflatable boat.

Actually it was a good respite because we were able to get away from the scene for a little bit and clear our heads and the air was clear and we were able to see the magnitude of what had just happened with us.

We got into the zodiac, and we traveled down the Hudson River to the MIL, the marine input center, the Coast Guard station, where they dock their vessels. Of course Louie got off, and he was going to hold the boat for me, and then we got carried out into the water. Then something jammed in the propeller, so we're stranded out there.

I saw some Coast Guard or some New York City cops in another zodiac. I tried to wave them down, and they zipped by. Five minutes later Louie is trying to throw me a life preserver on a rope, which got about two feet off of the pier. It was comical, to say the least. He was able to unwrap the rope from the propeller, and we got started again. I got up the ladder, and I exited.

At that point we went over to the ferry terminal. There were some EMS crews there

already. I'm not positive whether I met Dr. Cherson at that point or if it was slightly thereafter, but in essence we took over the second floor of the ferry terminal and we established a medical treatment site.

We had moved all the benches out. We had prioritized all the areas as far as treatments. A number of physicians and health care professionals had come in, civilians from the street. Dominic Maggiore was there at the time and helped set up the treatment and staging areas.

Essentially I spent the best part of the day there, trying to get things established, thinking that there was going to be a mass exodus to the ferry terminal, patients looking for treatment, at least everybody going back to Staten Island.

In essence we didn't treat that many patients. We did about five transports, one being Deputy Chief Robert Browne. He had staggered in. He had severe conjunctiva of both eyes and some back pain. He was immobilized and transported to Penninsular General.

About 4:30 I was asked to go over to the command post which is located at Chambers and West, so I had gotten together -- I was with Mark Steffens, Fred Villani and Louie Cook. We picked up the car, brushed it off. There was about four or five inches of dust on the car.

We traversed around the east side of Manhattan, tried to get to Chambers and West. We had gotten to -- I don't know what street this is -- Washington. We were at Washington and Chambers when we saw number seven come down. That was about 5:20. We watched that come down. We watched this plume of smoke coming at us.

I just drove up the block, and I said, "Everybody stay in the car." We waited for everything.

We went to the command post. I was shot for the day. I had severe conjunctiva. I couldn't breathe. I came back at 6 the next morning.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. That's it. I think everybody's story is going to tell it.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes the

interview. The time now is 855 hours.

Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110106

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT JOHN NEVINS

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. NEVINS

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is October 17, 2001. The time is 1327 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Lieutenant JOHN NEVINS, New York City Fire Department, assigned to fire operations.

Q. We are conducting this interview at 9 Metrotech, fourth floor, in the BITS interview room, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. On September 11, I was at my job location at 9 Metrotech, 7th floor. At approximately 8:35, 8:40, somebody announced in the office that a plane had struck the World Trade Center, at which time, we looked out the window. We could see that there was a large hole in one of the towers of the World Trade Center.

I proceeded with Lieutenant Bradley Mann down to the EMS operations area, obtained radios, and began to respond to the assignment.

We exited 9 Metrotech from the front doors, proceeded around to the garage area where we met Citywide Chief Sal Cassano, exiting the garage. We got into his car and responded into Manhattan. I believe he went -- I'm not sure which way he went through Brooklyn, but he arrived at the Sand Street entrance to

J. NEVINS

Brooklyn Bridge, proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge into lower Manhattan.

We exited the car. I believe the Chief parked at West and Vesey Street. Actually, the map is more (inaudible). I believe this is Broadway.

Q. Yes, this is West Broadway.

A. Yes, West Broadway, behind the US Post Office Federal Office Building across the street from the 7 World Trade, Lieutenant Mann and myself began down towards West Street on Vesey. Chief Cassano exited the vehicle and I believe he headed towards Church Street. That was the last I saw of him until Thursday.

As we turned the corner and were standing in front of 7 World Trade, the second plane struck tower number 2. Lieutenant Mann and myself paused momentarily to find some shelter in front of 7 World Trade under an overpass. We then proceeded once we were safe farther down Vesey Street to the corner of West Street, where we took over West and Vesey staging.

We began staging ambulances on Vesey Street between West and North End Avenue. I'm not sure of the exact number of ambulances, somewhere between 20 and 30 had arrived from numerous agencies; Lenox Hill, Cabrini, FDNY. Also at this location a MERV was staged



J. NEVINS

approximately between 3 World Financial and 12 World Financial. There is a parking lot in front of the Embassy Suites Hotel. We staged in the street facing North End Avenue.

From there we spent -- at that point, from the staging location, we remained there staging ambulances until the collapse of 2 World Trade Center. Just prior to the collapse of 2 World Trade Center, probably 5 to 10 minutes, Chief Fred Villani arrived at our location and he was transitioning into taking over the staging at that location.

At that point 2 World Trade Center began to collapse. I was directed by Chief Villani to run, at which time we continued down Vesey Street on to North End Avenue. Following the collapse, we attempted to regroup, shuttle ambulances down on to North End and reestablish the staging location at that area.

For approximately 10 to 15 minutes we continued to do that until we were told that -- I believe at the direction of the police, that that area was probably unsafe due to the impending collapse in number 1 World Trade Center.

At that point, I continued down North End Avenue towards Murray Street. At that point I entered

J. NEVINS

a construction trailer, I believe located between Murray and Park Place in an attempt to find a helmet. At that point, the collapse of number 1 World Trade Center occurred and myself and a large group of police, firefighters, and some civilians took refuge in that area until the debris and dust cloud had settled.

Following that, I exited the construction trailers, headed farther down North End Avenue attempting to locate personnel and ambulances. I came around to the park area along the River Terrace, at Chambers Street, and at that point I found approximately 3 ambulances. I believe one was a Lenox Hill bus and two EMTs or paramedics, who stated that they had shuttled the ambulances to that location. However, they weren't aware of where the crews for the trucks had gone or the location of any other personnel.

At that point we attempted to -- I attempted to gather personnel at that location and through the park, I began to walk through the park to see if there were any personnel taking refuge in the park. I didn't find any. However, along the bulkhead of the park, there was numerous New York Waterway ferries, so we attempted to establish a transport center if necessary

J. NEVINS

with them to transport any patients to New Jersey if it became necessary.

I was standing by at that location when the police then directed us to exit the park due to the fact that they believed there was a ruptured gas main underneath the park. I headed down Chambers Street to West Street, at which point I ran into EMT Richie Zarrillo from operations, Chief Hirth and his aide.

At that point I asked Chief Hirth for direction. I was told that he was not sure what exactly -- whether we should head back toward the World Trade Center or head up to Chelsea Piers, where a casualty collection point had been set up. I had heard that previously on the radio, so I decided along with EMT Zarrillo that I would head up to Chelsea Piers.

I started walking along West Street for numerous blocks until I was able to get a ride with a Hatzolah ambulance up to the staging location at Chelsea Piers, where I again became the secondary staging officer for Chelsea Piers.

Q. Do you remember approximately what time that was by the time you got up to the pier?

A. Probably half an hour to 45 minutes after the collapse of the second tower.

J. NEVINS

Q. When you came over to Vesey and West, prior to the first collapse, most of the vehicles there, the ambulances, were not Department ambulances?

A. No, most of them were not Department ambulances. There were ambulances from Lenox Hill, there were Hatzolah volunteers, there were a few EMS ambulances. One of them was I believe 22 Henry, Staten Island HAZTAC ambulance. I remember that one specifically because they had requested they needed to bring their HAZTAC equipment with them. I believe there was a Metro Care ambulance that was --

There was vehicle 125 and -- unfortunately the list of all the units that were in staging were -- got lost in the ensuing.

Q. Chaos?

A. Chaos of the collapse. There were a few Chief's cars. I believe they were Fire Department, Chief's vehicles, unmarked vehicles, that were on Vesey Street off of West Avenue. There was a small upgrade across from American Express. They were parked along there next to the -- there is a parking lot there.

Q. You were with Lieutenant Mann?

A. Yes, Brad Mann.

Q. He is from EMS?

J. NEVINS

A. Yes. Fire operations, EMS fire operations.

Q. Did you see any other Department personnel when you got over to West and Vesey that you recognize their full name that you could place there?

A. Not from FDNY, but there were -- actually, one of the FDNY people that was there was Gary Smiley, a paramedic, and his partner. I'm not sure who his partner was that day. I actually had seen him later at Chelsea Piers. He arrived with his ambulance and his partner. Chief Villani was in that area. Again his car was parked on Vesey between West and North End.

One of the others, let's see, Raoul Perez, he is a paramedic for Lenox Hill, him and his partner were in the staging area. I can't think of anybody else that I definitely recognized. There was a Hatzolah crew. I believe they were the midtown Hatzolah. There were approximately 4 to 5 people in their ambulance. They just kept asking me if they needed to -- if I wanted to send them up towards the building. However, I told them to stay with their vehicle.

Q. At that point were there any patients in the area?

A. We were getting reports of patients in the foyer areas between 3 World Financial Center and 4

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World Financial Center. However, I hadn't headed over to that area and none of the crews that were with me were reporting treating any patients. One ambulance did come through, I'm not sure whether it had picked up a patient, however, as they were heading out past the staged ambulances, we stopped them and they said they were transporting a burn patient. They were headed I believe to Cornell. I believe they left prior to the collapse.

Q. When the first tower came down, from where you were, debris that was coming down, did it come down into the staging area here or --

A. No.

Q. Can you remember?

A. No, the only thing that affected us was dust and debris. I had actually been standing -- I was standing facing towards North End Avenue, so I was facing away from the building when there was a -- started a loud noise, I remember like a sound, like a cracking sound and Chief Villani ran past me and told me, John, run for your life.

As I turned around it appeared to be the top of the tower was shifting. I just started running down towards North End. I didn't stop until I rounded the

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corner past the Embassy Suites hotel and at that point, there was a lot of dust and debris, tough to see back down. Couldn't see down Vesey Street to West Street, so I was unable to see where debris had landed. I began in the intersection attempting to get personnel to move ambulances and bring them farther up the street and around back onto North End Avenue.

Also at that point, I'm not sure which -- there was an ambulance from the voluntary hospital treating one patient on a corner, I guess it's the southwest corner of North End and Vesey on the corner. There's an apartment complex across North End, by 4 World Financial. There was a patient on the corner there and I directed one of the voluntary hospital units who had both crew members to treat the patient there.

Again, what happened to that patient and where they went, I'm not really sure, due to the fact that they had loaded the patient into the ambulance, but we were directed to move farther away before they had given me any disposition on where they were going.

Q. Right. Okay. You said the best you remember, Chief Villani arrived after the second plane had attacked, but prior to the collapses?

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A. Right. It was very close to the collapse of the first tower. Approximately 10, 15 minutes, because we hadn't even -- I hadn't given him the full report on the ambulances that were in the staging location and what resources were available and patients were being treated.

Q. Any thoughts or comments on the situation?

A. Not really. Very chaotic scene. I think we did the best we could given the situation and then, you know, the ensuing -- once the tower started to collapse, we were -- we did the best we could.

Actually, one thing that just thinking about it now sticks in my mind. The MERV driver should be commended. He went back and -- I have a clear mental picture of the MERV with both ramps hanging out, going around the corner from Vesey on to North End. But the guy went back, definitely, probably the farthest down the block to save the MERV to get it out of there, get it away from the collapse.

Q. The MERV was I assume from Bellevue?

A. Yes, that was MERV 1 from Bellevue.

Q. Is anything else you would like to add?

A. I think that's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Time is now 1445



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hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110108

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SAMUEL HARRIS

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 17th, 2001. The time now is 1025 hours. This is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area.

EMT HARRIS: My name is Samuel D. Harris. I'm an EMT. I work in the Bureau of Communications.

MR. FEILER: Fire Department of the City of New York. We're conducting the interview at a conference room within investigations and trials, and the interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can go ahead, sir.

A. I reported for work at 7 a.m. on September 11th. Most of the morning was pretty routine up until the first reports of the airliner hitting the World Trade Center.

About that time I was getting some coffee. I noticed that people who were in operations, which is adjacent to communications,

were scrambling. I didn't know why. They were running into FOC I guess to -- at first thoughts I thought that somebody had went down ill in FOC the way people were running and moving. But then when I noticed that nobody was really calling for any ambulances or bus, I noticed it had to be something more.

As I got more to my desk, I noticed people started talking about looking through the window, look out the window. At that point, still at my desk, curious as to what's going on, I was approached by Commissioner Gregory, who stated to Captain Pinkus that a plane had struck the twin towers. So that probably was around 8:50, around that time. He then instructed me, Captain D'Amato and Captain Jace Pinkus, and we got into his vehicle and we headed toward Manhattan.

Coming across the Brooklyn Bridge, you can see that the tower was just engulfed. Tower one was engulfed. As I got across the bridge and I got to West and Vesey, right at what is now considered ground zero -- I was literally right at the corner -- I then was instructed to move my

car, move the commissioner's car, further up Vesey toward North End Avenue. But I wasn't able to get up that far because police officers were cutting that block off.

Q. You had originally stopped at West and Vesey?

A. West and Vesey Streets.

At that time I was still in contact with Captain Pinkus. I had lost sight of Commissioner Gregory and Captain D'Amato. As I went to park the car, they scrambled to whatever other areas they proceeded to.

I met back up with Captain Pinkus, and we went back to West Street, where we met up with Chief Gombo, the assistant chief of EMS operations, and Lieutenant Ross Terranova. I was assigned to Lieutenant Terranova to kind of keep a record of what was going on.

At that point Captain Pinkus was detailed to do something else with vehicle operations with staging. Chief Gombo, myself and Ross Terranova, we went into what was the operation command post at that time. It was in One World Trade Center in the foyer basement

area.

At that time there were numerous people in there, people from the World Trade Center, people from OEM, people from all over, Port Authority, firemen, EMTs, the Fire commissioner, the first deputy, Commissioner Tierney. You couldn't count how many people that were probably just like right there in that foyer.

I believe at that point after some preliminary instructions were made, I noticed that people were going upstairs. They were shutting down elevators and just trying to move people expeditiously out of the building. Sometime after that, maybe 20 minutes, I don't even think it was, I believe the decision was made that we should pull back to across the street.

Without getting into great detail, it was very graphic some of the scenery that you saw just even walking into the building. But we made the decision -- they made the decision, I should say, to go across the street. As we did, we were on West, which would probably be the World Financial Center or American Express because

they're so closely together.

Everybody was basically standing in the garage area. It has a two-door garage in this area at the corner. At that point everybody was making operations. Chief Gombo instructed me to go inside the building and contact Chief Diggs about point-to-point operations and communications so that they can have a whole line that was set up or dedicated that people can talk point to point without any interference.

As I followed that direction, as I started to go into the building, I heard on the radio that what I was instructed to do was already done, primarily. You could hear it over the command frequency that it was already being done. But just to follow those orders that were given to me, I went ahead inside the building. I proceeded to make this phone call.

As I got through to Chief Diggs, I believe I remember seeing Commissioner Fitzpatrick in there for a brief minute. I believe he walked out. At that point I spoke to Chief Diggs. I got direction from him. He gave me direction to relay back to Chief Gombo.

As I related back to Chief Gombo -- or I was getting ready to walk out and tell Chief Gombo what I was told, that's when tower one started to pancake and collapse. The only thing that I remember was the guy in front of me who was standing there in awe of just the earthquake feel, for myself as well.

I had grabbed him because I didn't know if we were going to walk out of that building. The glass was shattering around us. We were in the big foyer. The building that we were in was primarily glass doored, and so was the area that you had to go in to use the phone, which was sectioned off.

As I grabbed him and we ran back inside, some gentleman -- I believe he worked for the building. I don't recall his name. I believe this gentleman worked in the building, in that particular building. He was one of seven people that were in the building with me after One started to crumble.

As we ran down the foyer or down the hallway, at that point it was so dark and so thick and the lights went right away that you



couldn't even see your hand before your face. As you turn back to just look down the corridor, you couldn't even see the corridor that you just ran down. That's how dark it was. That's how eerie it was. That's how very scared I believe of us were keep down. But we all kept cool heads. We all stayed together. We were looking for another exit, and there weren't any.

Q. Who was in that group with you?

A. Now with me there was a paramedic. I believe I learned his last -- what's the name? Glenn. He was in there with me. There were two New York City detectives in there with me and the building manager for that building, and the rest were just office workers. There were no other people left.

The two detectives basically -- we coordinated and I was trying to tell them that the building came down. He thought I was being kind of nervous. I told him, yes, I am, but I'm not all that nervous. I just wanted to make sure that we were all alive, that that big building was not going to cave in on this little building and we were going to get crushed, because who

knew.

After we made several attempts to look for other exits out of the building outside of the front door, there were no other exits. What we did was the building manager took us into what seemed like a computer room or a security room, and he found some flashlights.

The decision was made for us to wait for a period of time, probably I'd say we waited a whole hour, maybe more before we could even see anything. There was that much dust and smoke, and you couldn't really breathe.

So we waited until some of the dust settled, and then we all -- two people would go ahead and check to see if we can go out the front door. If there was no access way from the front door, we would wait until somebody came and eventually got us. But we would all stay together.

So what we did was we formed a line. We grabbed each other's belts, and we shined the flashlights. We didn't go up to a certain point, and the two men went ahead. They noticed that there was an exit way for us to get out. Thank

God.

After we came out --

Q. Where did you come out of?

A. I came right out the front door that I went in, which is probably the World Financial building, World Financial Center building, because this would be the garage area right here. In the first rehaps I believed it was the American Express building, only because it was so closely related.

After we came out of the building, I immediately went to the garage area. The garage area where there were hundreds of people standing there when I left to make this phone call, there was about 25 firemen.

At that point I ran into Chief Kowalczyk's aide, and I was asking him where was his boss. He said he didn't know, and he had no clue as to where he was. He was with Chief Gombo and several of the others before I walked into the building to make the phone call.

Outside of that, the field comm. truck, the van truck was crushed. The guard shack that stands between the two doors in the garage was

crushed. It looked almost like the two garage doors were blown open. Debris was everywhere: metal, paper, dust.

At that point after staying there for I'd say 20 minutes trying to find somebody I know, I ran into Captain Sickles, Howard Sickles, and I noticed that he was standing toward the curb or what would have been the curb. He was trying to give a progress report.

I was trying to persuade him to let's move out, to let's get out of this area, for fear of whatever is going to happen again.

Q. Where was that located?

A. That was at the beginning of this building at probably West Street. So we're facing West at this point.

Q. On Vesey?

A. I'm sorry, Vesey. We're facing Vesey at this point. He's at the corner, and I'm trying to get him to let's go up Vesey toward North End. Let's go further up to get away from the aftermath.

At that point as I was trying to persuade him, I did see at that point Chief

Ganci. Chief Ganci was trying to rally some of the firefighters that were in the area to also move up toward North End, to move out of the area.

As he was doing that, I was still trying to persuade Captain Sickles to give the 12 and make it brief but let's go. He continued on the radio to the point where I just grabbed him by the arm and was pulling him, let's go, let's get out of here.

There was a firefighter at the corner of Vesey and North End when we walked up to North End, and he said that this was really bad. I said, "Yes, it is. How could something like this happen." I said, "Well, listen, what we should do is move because the north tower is on fire still. I said, "We don't know if this one is going to come down, so let's move out of the area."

At that point police officers and other people were trying to move people up North End Avenue to get them away from -- or more so up Vesey toward North End.

At that point as I was walking up, I

approached where the commissioner's car was, and that's when you heard the rumble again and the other tower started to come down. At that point my thought was to try to move the commissioner's car, and right behind me unbeknownst to me was Lieutenant Ross Terranova, who told me, "Forget it. Just go. Let's go," and we all started running, with Captain Sickles behind us.

We ran into North End Avenue, and right in the back of North End Avenue at the corner off to the right was where the MERV was. There's a building of some sort there like a hotel or like a coffee shop right on the corner where the MERV was parked. We all ran inside there.

At that point right behind us about 20 people -- two police officers were badly hurt. They probably got hit with some type of rubble, and they rushed them up that way. There were a few civilians. The LSU unit was there, and me and a couple other EMTs just started trying to bandage who was there and treat who was there.

At that point I was reunited with Captain Pinkus again at that point and some of the other EMS chiefs: Chief Basile, Chief

Carrasquillo, Chief Gombo, at that point -- I did see him for a brief minute -- Chief Pascale.

At that point after that area was made for a treatment area for people who were coming in, everybody was being taken care of. Everybody was given water to flush their eyes and to give them some sort of first aid, some sort of comfort, given what they just went through.

At that point about an hour or so, hour and a half after that, me, Captain Pinkus and Chief Pascale proceeded to go to Chelsea Pier, where we stayed basically for the rest of the duration of the evening into the morning.

Q. Were you aware that a second plane had hit one of the towers?

A. Yes. I believe the second plane hit just shortly after probably coming off the Brooklyn Bridge. I didn't really realize it until after, because I believe you felt like the bridge shift as I was coming over, and I never felt it that way. You didn't realize it. My whole modem was just to get across this bridge, get to West and Vesey.

Q. What frequency were you utilizing?

A. At the time I was on the command frequency.

Q. EMS command?

A. Yes.

Q. And were you given any specific locations where to go to; do you recall?

A. No, not until -- no, because when I got to Lieutenant Terranova, basically they were still in the process of setting up staging areas. I believe that the staging area switched quite a few times in the time that I was with him before one had collapsed.

So the decision was trying to put people in areas of safety but the greater number of where we can get the most resources available without anybody.

Q. You said you had seen Chief Kowalczyk's aide. Do you know who that was?

A. I don't know his name offhand. I know him by face. I didn't know his name.

Q. Was there any other EMS people that you saw, firefighters, chiefs, anybody that you recognized?

A. Not so much out of the firefighters.



But like the paramedic, I didn't know him until afterwards. We talked later.

Q. What was his name?

A. Glenn, Mike Glenn.

Basically it was Chief Gombo, Chief Basile, Chief Pascale, Chief Hannafey, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Scibelli, I saw later in the evening. But most of those -- Alan Cruz on the ALS unit from Manhattan. The MERV driver I knew from 13. I didn't really know his name, but I recall him being. Sedley, Sedley was another LSU driver from Brooklyn. He was there. I remember seeing him.

There was just so many people. Linda McCarthy from EMD. She was there. There was just so many people that I crossed paths with, but then as you're trying to focus on just the task at hand, I was just -- basically coming out of the building after the first collapse, I was nervous for everybody that was standing out there because if it wasn't for Chief Gombo, I mean, I would have been out there too instead of inside.

I don't know. I really don't know, if Chief Gombo would have not sent me in that

building, I thought we would have been amongst them. I'm glad and relieved to see that he wasn't hurt or injured during the aftermath.

I lost sight of Commissioner Gregory. I didn't see him. I didn't hear of him until like at least the next day. Also Captain D'Amato, I didn't hear his whereabouts or how he was.

Once I got to Chelsea Pier, Chief Pascale assigned me with Captain Boyle, Jack Boyle, and I was assigned with him for a good many hours. We stayed a good 12, maybe 13 hours together, driving people back and forth, the doctors, setting up the doctors and the triage and the temporary morgue that was all down at Chelsea Pier.

I was able to focus on the task basically that was given to me. It was just hard to forget. Every few minutes you thought about somebody you knew back there that you didn't hear was okay. Chief McCracken, for that matter, for a long time, until I got to see him later on in the night.

I didn't hear the passing of the first

deputy commissioner until later on, and also Chief Ganci, who I had just saw at that building. I believe once I started to make my move up Vesey more toward North End Avenue, I believe they made probably the decision to see what was going to happen in tower two.

It was my thought that that's where they were fatally taken away from us at that point, that maybe they went down to building two, which is probable because I didn't see them after that.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to before we conclude?

A. No, without really getting into some of the graphical details, that was pretty much as accurately as I can come to say what happened.

Q. Thank you very much for participating in the interview.

A. You're welcome.

MR. FEILER: The time now is 1052 hours, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110112

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN ROTHMUND

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 17th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 1655 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT ROTHMUND: JOHN ROTHMUND, EMT, Battalion 22.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 22 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. All yours, John.

A. Okay. I was working 22 Adam with John Heer, my partner. We got assigned a job along with I believe five other units at the time. They told us to respond to the foot of the Verrazano Bridge and stand by. So we went. We were 63.

By the time we got to the foot of the VZ, they had already called us through to the Brooklyn side of the VZ and stand by. Not a clue, never got a job, never heard anything. We really didn't know what was going on.

We go over the bridge. As we get over the bridge, we look to our left and we can see

one of the towers was burning. So we had an idea what was going on. We got about to the foot of the Verrazano Bridge, and they called us again and told us to take it to the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel and stand by.

Once we got onto the Gowanus and over that bridge, there was a chain of emergency vehicles. We just kept going. We got to the foot of the tunnel. There was no way to turn off, no way to go, so you had to keep going.

We went into Manhattan, came out through the tunnel. We wound up going up West up until I think it was Liberty, and staging was set at Liberty and West, right in that -- it could have been here (indicating), over there.

At the time we had no idea what was going on. The only thing we knew, there was a fire, and we knew that from looking over off the bridge that a plane had hit it, but we thought it was a Cessna, like a little tiny private airplane. Nobody had a clue it was a commercial liner.

Q. Right.

A. So we set up staging at that area,

Liberty and West, and my partner and I got out. We were one of the first three at that location, ambulances. We got out. Saw how close we were in relation to the towers, we also saw that both towers were in flames. We didn't know what was going on there either.

We decided to go see who we could talk to. We relocated the staging. We felt that it was totally unsafe where we were. So me and my partner tried to find authority figures, and there was really none around. The only person that seemed to have any kind of sense of why the staging was there was a voluntary unit.

We figured, you know what, we're just going to relocate them. We relocated from Liberty and West down to South End. We started to line ambulances from South End up until Liberty. So you came from South End and Albany. I imagine it was Albany. Right now I can't remember. From the map that's what it looks like.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know, there had to be 20, 30 ambulances there that we moved. We felt it was

unsafe where we were.

Q. Right.

A. A long story short, we get all our stuff out, our equipment out, and we stand by. We were just waiting. We received one patient which had a head injury, laceration, who we gave to the voluntary Hazollah unit, because they already had a previous patient and they were going to go 82 to the hospital. So we put them with them so we don't lose another bus.

At this time we saw people jumping from the roof, so we kind of realized the gravity of everything. We really just thought it was a bad fire. We really didn't know what the hell was going on. We saw so many people jumping. We just waited.

We had walked up with equipment and whatnot from this location and up until Liberty, and we were standing by on Liberty just trying to see what was going on. Again, there was really no authority figures whatsoever.

At that time we were looking at the top of the towers and all the rubble and people coming off, and all of a sudden you heard -- it



sounded like another airplane, or a missile. It was like a slow shake. The whole ground just vibrated and shook. We just told everybody to run, run into a building, let's go, run, run, run.

We ran off of Liberty. We couldn't get very far. We got into a superette. We threw as many people as were coming into this superette, me and my partner. We never left each other's side the whole entire time. We were like Velcro. We got everybody into the deli superette. I don't know what the hell it was. It was big. It was good size.

After that the debris was just coming down and coming down. Nobody could really stand there anymore. There was nobody else coming in, so we went in. We got inside. Again, we're the only kind of emergency service people that were in there. We were just as scared and nervous as everybody else. We just couldn't panic.

We had about 40 people in this deli that we had to try and keep calm for a while. For the longest time we thought we were pinned in. We thought the rubble was in front. It was

rubble in front of the deli, in front of the windows. Whatever debris can be. We really didn't know. We just saw dark smoke.

One guy fainted in the back, some Parks Department person, green uniform, gold shield. We roused him. He woke up. At that time after trying to keep everybody in the back of the store and calm, we tried to find an alternate exit.

As we were trying to find an exit, somebody came down from the buildings up top; I don't know how many floors. I know we walked three floors. Anyway, we tried to find it, and they said there's women and children up top in the building that are stuck. They can't breathe, there's smoke, there's so much smoke nobody could breathe.

So me and my partner grabbed a couple wet towels, ran upstairs, pulled out probably upwards of 10 to 20 people, women, children, pregnant women, pets, whatever the hell was up there, and we brought them all down into the store, because we had seen a back door.

The back door was just as much filled with soot and smoke, but it was a way out. So we

figured we would keep everybody in here protected for a while. We brought everybody down. We just sat there and waited for a minute or two we saw that the front was clearing up. Everybody remained in side for a little while.

We went outside, and you could see your hand in front of your face. That's how much it had cleared up. So we decided we've got to go and see what's going on. So we told everybody stay inside for a few minutes and let the dust settle. We had no patients. Everybody was relatively shook up, whatnot, but for the most part everybody was all right.

We went outside. It was just like horrible. It was like a war. There was just nothing but soot and concrete chunks and whatever everywhere. Ambulances were covered in soot, doors wide open. There was nothing you could do. Everything was just a foot of soot and dirt, whatever you want to call it.

We came out of the deli, and we see Chief Grant. We see him walk by. He was kind of dazed a little bit altered, a little AMS there. We went up to him to actually look for some kind

of -- to find out where we were going, what the situation was. He became more of a patient than anything. We made him our priority at the time because nobody else was there anyway. We put him back in the deli.

We told everybody it's clearing up, to head to the water, come around, go down toward the esplanade. We treated him, gave him oxygen, flushed his eyes, gave water, whatever, tried to hook him up. He was a little bit shocked, is really what it came down to.

We treated him for a few minutes. A few minutes -- time had no concept whatsoever, really no concept. It could have been 15 minutes; it could have been 5 seconds. I have no clue. We took care of him.

We wound up having another patient outside with minor bumps and bruises. We went to check on him with my partner. We never left each other. When I say "me," I mean "we"; okay?

Q. Right.

A. We went to check on this person. We turned around and Chief Grant was walking out of the building, heading right to the water. We

figured, you know what, he's going in a good direction, let him go. We're going to watch him walk down and that's it.

That was the only place that had any kind of air was down next to the water.

Q. Right.

A. So we sent as many people as we could down towards the water if they're able to walk. We did have a few fractures and whatnot. Splinted like lightning, you know what I mean, got them out of there.

Then we got into the ambulance, threw the stretcher back in the ambulance, because it was still running, and we figured the other tower's got to be coming down. So we took the ambulance and we moved the ambulance away down to the esplanade. Where we figured it would be kind of safe.

Q. Right.

A. As we were going down I think it was Albany, I imagine. I'm really not sure. As we were going down Albany, I saw a captain. Oh, and at the time, after Grant had walked down towards the water, Chief McCracken came walking down and

walked back up. I couldn't catch the man. I don't know where he went. He disappeared into the smoke. I couldn't catch up to him no matter how much I tried. So we figured we're alone here, you know.

As we were pulling down, we saw some captain. I really don't know who the gentleman was -- heavysset guy, black hair, it appeared to be, white helmet, blue shirt and the bars, you know -- asking us for a ride. I'm not going anywhere, I'm telling him. We're going down to the corner here, you know.

I guess shock kind of took over him too, kind of getting emotional and whatnot. So we stopped and we let him into to the empty seat that we were going to drive, took him down.

The inside of the ambulance was in no better shape than the outside air was. But we brought him down to there, told him here, get out, parked the truck, turned the battery off, whatever, got another patient.

So I walked him back up again and got another patient. When I say "patients," minor: bruises, cuts and scratches, fractures that, go

ahead, keep walking. Fix you up quick and go.

As we made our way back into it again trying to get -- to help, the other tower came down. We couldn't see anything, the smoke was just -- we couldn't -- the stuff, soot.

Q. Where were you when the second tower came down?

A. The second tower came down --

Q. Still back down in this area?

A. No. We were probably up on South End or you know what, it might have been more on West. Yeah, it had to be on West, because we had moved the bus down and we had started walking north to get -- to help. That's what you assumed happened was the towers came down.

Q. Right.

A. We didn't know whether it came down or not. We really thought it was another plane hitting, but we figured if it was it was devastating, whatever it was.

After we got the bus to safety, because that was our only egress out of there was that bus.

Q. Right.

A. We treated another one, sent him on his way and went back up. Like I said, did a couple fractures -- what I'm guessing is Albany to west side. I'm really not sure.

We went up toward midtown, and we went left on either South End or West. Right before we got anywhere near the towers, the other one -- you couldn't see the towers. You looked up and you couldn't see what was there or not. There was nothing but smoke.

All of a sudden it happened again, the same exact sound, the same thing.

Q. The noise and the vibrations?

A. The noise and the vibrations.

At that point everything -- it just came down. All you saw was the cloud of smoke coming at you, so we ran. No shame. We ran --

Q. None at all.

A. -- right down Albany again to the esplanade. We escorted hundreds, hundreds of people down the esplanade, walked down to -- I have no idea where it was. We got to a point in the esplanade that seemed like it had a dock on it of some sort. A fireman or police officer --



I was with maybe a handful of firemen, maybe two or three police officers.

As I got down and escorted people out, we were trying to keep away from the smoke. We only had the respirators, which was after the second tower came down anyway.

Q. Right.

A. We just inhaled that air. And the air was nice over here. If you stayed on the bottom, stayed down on the ground and sucked a little air, you got a clear breath.

Q. Right.

A. Pulled all kinds of people down. Again, we didn't know what was going on. We thought it was a bomb, you know, like planes were dropping from the sky or missiles were hitting. We didn't know what the hell was going on.

So a police officer took out a Chinese restaurant door, knocked it in. Whatever the case may be, he got in. We started lifting people up into this restaurant, the women, the kids, anybody, elderly people. We had to lift them over some kind of railing, because it was the easiest access from the esplanade to get them

in and out, because, again, it was just like a war zone. You didn't know what the hell was happening.

So we got as many people as we could that came walking along that esplanade into that building and kept them there. At that time I believe Mark Harris -- I saw Mark Harris and Kathy Zarr. They came over, and as they started to make up the triage area with zero equipment. We had nothing. Just maybe a supportive thing for themselves or for the patients. We really had nothing to do anything with.

The boats started coming in on the corner over the water. We started pulling out the women and children from where we put them in not 20 minutes before or however long before. We started pulling them back out, put them on boats to get them over to New Jersey. I don't know how long we did that for. Again, treatment for minor things along the way, nothing to speak of. We pulled them all out.

We didn't like the idea of having a triage here because we had nothing. We decided we've got to walk and find somebody else, some

kind of brass.

Q. Right?

A. After this whole place was evacuated, there was nobody left on this esplanade, me and my partner took off walking down -- I don't see it on the map. I really wouldn't know where to begin what the name of the street would be.

Q. Let me see if I have another map. I don't know if that's going to be any better.

A. Not a bad map. We were right here.  
This would be --

Q. South Cove Park?

A. Right. This is where we were. South Cove Park is where we were putting people on boats and where we had put the people into that restaurant, keeping them safe and out of the fumes, the smoke.

After we got everybody off of that esplanade and out of that restaurant, women and children, onto these boats, we had no patients. It was just mostly men who were totally capable of handling themselves.

Q. Right.

A. Police officers there, firemen, still

remained there. Like I said, we had no brass. We had no equipment to set up a triage spot. So we started to walk down along the esplanade down South Cove Park. As we were about to turn the corner, we saw another EMS guy. I don't know who he was. He said they set up a triage point, a staging point, at South Ferry and they also set one up at Chelsea Pier.

So in relation to where we were at the time, we felt that the south ferry was a lot closer. So before we walked any further, we decided we've got to go back and see what we could do. We turn around, went back up. As we went back up, everybody was just coming back down. I mean, firemen, cops, everybody, just coming back away from there. Nobody was saying much of anything, just like don't go there, just leave, don't go in there.

So we went back up to where we had parked our ambulance on Albany and the esplanade, went to get back into the ambulance, and the windows were all gone. All the windows were blown out in the back. We tried to get in to start it. There was an amazing cloud of soot in

there. The soot was on the seats like six inches deep. We jumped in to try to get it started, and she was dead.

So we then walked the whole esplanade down to I guess maybe First Avenue, First Place, still on the esplanade, though, to where we found a chief. I don't know who the man was. Nicest guy in the world.

Q. EMS chief?

A. EMS chief. EMS chief. I don't know who he was. He didn't want to hear anything but how we were. I guess we looked pretty horrible at the time. He asked us if we needed treatment, whatnot. We said we needed a little rest, a little water, wipe our eyes out of the soot.

He said he was setting up a small staging spot with just one ambulance. He had equipment, had oxygen. He didn't have an oxygen regulator. It just so happened I had my own personal regulator on me that I didn't want to leave in the ambulance and I took, which I never saw again. It was gone. I gave him the oxygen.

Again, we set up a treatment area right at that area. I don't know at all where that

would be except for maybe First and esplanade if that even exists. Needless to say, we sat there for an hour or so. Again, time really is hard.

Q. Right.

A. Evacuating people off of Manhattan onto boats with the Fire Department and Police Department. We treated whomever needed to be treated in the ambulance that was there. There was about maybe five or six other techs there, and I imagine the chief stayed. I don't know who it would be.

We didn't do much treatment after that point because we were pretty shot. He was just letting us sit for a few minutes, cooling off, whatever. If I had to guess, I would say this was about 1:00 now, maybe 2:00. This was late. We were there for a good piece of time. We didn't get down to this ferry until maybe 2, 3:00, something like that.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm really not sure. But he had told us that this area was a safe area. He had heard something about the ferry being set up as a triage point, but he wasn't sure. He said as

soon as he gets more information he'll move us if he needs to. But as it was, we were in a safe area. We had a steady flow of people who were potential patients. So we remained there for a good piece of time. I don't know how long.

After most of the patients evacuated off the island already in the boats -- and there were numerous amounts of boats along the promenade, just pulling people on. You throw them on.

Q. Right.

A. We all picked up and walked. I guess the esplanade goes around lower Manhattan. So we walked along the water across a park -- I don't know where the park is; here you go, Robert F. Wagner Park -- down to the ferry.

We got to the terminal, and it was like a godsend, because everybody's in there. All the triage stuff was set up.

That was it. We remained there. Not many people to treat at that time. Everybody was off the island. Anybody that was walking and able to treat was treated and sent off that island already, whether it be on a boat along the

promenade or underneath the ferry or Chelsea Pier, whoever walked over there. We didn't have anybody really that I can say was serious. Everybody was gone. They got up and left.

At that point we stayed there until 12:00 that night, maybe, 12:30 that night. I jumped on the ferry and came back to the island. I didn't have a ride once I got to the island. We had to take a train to Eltingville. We sat on the corner of Eltingville waiting for a lieutenant to come pick us up, which there was none of.

We wound up getting a ride from some hell of a nice guy that just pulled over and drove us back to the station. So that was the tie-in to the fitting night.

I don't know what else to say.

Q. When you first came into Manhattan through the battery, you came up the West Side Highway coming up there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember who else was with you when you got up to West and Liberty up there?

A. No. As far as units?



Q. Not necessarily the unit numbers.

A. I know a couple of the guys, but I'm new out here too. So I don't know them by name or anything.

Q. They were from --

A. No, they weren't from EMS. They were from Staten Island, yes. One was a Staten Island unit which pulled up -- I don't know, I'd have to say a few minutes, four minutes after I did, maybe.

Q. Volunteer units?

A. Yeah, volunteer.

Q. Staten Island Hospital?

A. Yeah, Staten Island Hospital.

One guy's name was Mitch who was over there. Then I saw a Vinnie's unit. These are ones that I took note of because I knew the guys.

Q. Right.

A. There was a few Hazollah. There was a couple of Richmond County. I saw some Metro people.

Again, when I pulled up it seemed they had this triage spot where the ambulances were sitting, awaiting patients. There was, I have to

say, a bravo ambulance, if I'm not mistaken. I don't really know for sure. None of them were EMS. None of these ambulances were EMS who set up this staging point. That's why we changed it. We said, you know what, this is not a spot for us to be in, so we moved it around.

Q. Okay.

A. That's all I remember. Nobody stopped there anymore. Everybody just turned around and came down the street. They didn't think twice about it.

That was it. I saw no brass. I saw no brass.

Q. On Liberty? You didn't come across any supervisors?

A. No. There was, I imagine it was a lieutenant, whether it was EMS or the Fire Department. I saw numerous PD who instructed me where to go, and the lieutenant instructed me where to go. I couldn't tell you who he was. If you paid me a million dollars, I wouldn't know.

There was umpteen brass all over here, but we hadn't gotten that far yet. After we relocated our ambulances, we got up to Liberty

and started walking in, and it happened.  
Everything came down. We didn't know where,  
what. We just took cover, basically.

It was west side to Liberty. We  
relocated from Liberty to South End and Albany.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments?

A. No. I'm glad I made it out of there;  
sorry for the people that didn't. I wish we  
could have done more, but there was nothing we  
could do.

Q. I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1722.

The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110115

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC WILLIAM SIMON

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 19th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time now is 1617 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC SIMON: WILLIAM SIMON. I'm a paramedic with the New York City Fire Department, Battalion 58, Brooklyn.

MR. RADENBERG: We're conducting the interview at EMS Battalion 58 concerning the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Bill, if you would start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. All right. It was a pretty routine day. We came on and we checked the truck and we figured we're going to be on our normal everyday routine assignments. When we're in Canarsie, not too far from the station, following our check out our vehicle, we heard a report of the Trade Center being struck.

At that point we proceeded closer to our 1089, because we knew that we would in all probability have to be utilized. We subsequently

were assigned to the city for a diff. breather at Broome and Broadway. That was, I would say, about 9:50.

We knew at that point that tower one had been struck and was on fire. We couldn't believe the reports. My first impression was that it probably was a terrorist act. I don't think the second building had been hit at that point. It was a bright, clear, sunny day, and my impression is any pilot, any novice pilot, tries to do everything in their power to avoid striking a high-rise building of that height.

At any rate, we were assigned to Broome and Broadway for a single individual having trouble breathing, which I thought was somewhat unusual because there should be hundreds of people related to that event having trouble breathing.

My partner, Barry Hirsch, was driving. We arrived in the city I would say maybe 10 to 12 minutes after we were assigned. I was basically doing the navigating for Barry so that we wouldn't make any mistakes and would take the most expeditious route.

We came across Delancy Street -- first of all we came into Manhattan through Brooklyn over the Manhattan Bridge, came off of the Manhattan Bridge and responded, took a few turns and got over to Allen Street, Allen Street to Delancy, and then we started to travel west on Delancy. Then we crossed Bowery and then Lafayette and we dropped down to Broome Street, Broome and Broadway.

We were both awestruck by the scenes that we saw of the dust and the debris cloud that we could see as we were entering the city. I believe by the time we got there, I think the second tower had been hit. That also was an awesome sight.

We got to Broadway, and there's a tremendous amount of dust, pulverized masonry on the ground, office materials, papers, computer files and probably 10,000 people walking north on Broadway in various states of -- I wouldn't say people were panicking, but they were walking briskly to get away, hastily.

Some people were wearing makeshift masks from scarves of their own clothing. Some

had obtained filtration masks, which we utilize on the ambulances, probably from some of the EMS crews that they had encountered.

What amazed me was that we were approximately 18 to 20 blocks from the World Trade Center plaza and the amount of dust that was on the street was anywhere from maybe a half inch to an inch, all over the cars, all over the street. The amount of paper looked like there had been a ticker tape parade on Broadway.

Also it reminded me of the descriptions of what a nuclear winter would look like after a nuclear attack or something out of what had happened at Hiroshima.

After we arrived at the scene in this maze of people that were walking past us, we parked the vehicle. We said there must be somebody out here who's having trouble breathing. So we exited the vehicle. We approached one of the police officers that were one of the officers directing traffic at the intersection. We asked her did anybody approach her about having trouble breathing. She said no, there's been hundreds of people that went past her, and nobody approached



her specifically.

We felt it would be appropriate to exit the vehicle and try to canvas those storefronts that were still open, because there were still some merchants that had their doorways open and were looking south at the event as this mass of people were walking past us.

So I went south of Broome Street and canvassed on the east and west side of the street, and my partner went north. We canvassed east and west, on the east and west sides of the street, to all the store owners and as many people as we could encounter. Amazingly nobody was complaining of trouble breathing.

We actually wanted to get a patient, because we wanted to get involved in the actual rescue at that point. We figured some of these people had to be in distress, but I think their primary focus was escape and to get to their loved ones and just to let their family members know that they were all right. They really didn't want to, unless it was absolutely necessary.

We even saw some people with minor

cuts, and they --

Q. Didn't want treatment?

A. Yeah, didn't want treatment. They said, "No, I'm fine."

So at that point we got back on the radio and we told the dispatcher our current location and our status and that at this point we had no patients or nobody that was requiring assistance.

We knew at that point we were probably going to be dispatched either to One World Trade Center Plaza or one of the other staging areas, and we subsequently were. We were instructed to respond to Chambers and West Street. That was the new staging area following the collapse of tower one. Units were being deployed over there.

It took us about five minutes to get over there, moving through the mass of people and vehicles and emergency rescue vehicles. The first EMS officer that we encountered were Lieutenant Fitton and Lieutenant Pinkus, who were on West Street. They were coordinating the reassignment of EMS units on the west side.

We identified ourselves. They're

colleagues of ours, and they acknowledged our presence and were glad to see us. We were glad to see them, somebody to give us some direction.

We parked our vehicle in the now redeployed staging area and got a quick briefing on the events that had transpired. There were still a lot of questions to be answered about the magnitude and what rescue efforts were actually going on and the conflicting stories about our people involved and how many firefighters and police officers were injured. All we know is this a horrendous event of amazing magnitude. I looked south, and I was mesmerized by what I saw. It was like something out of a movie except we're in it.

They asked us to park our vehicle and to walk south on West Street and to render any care to any people who were ambulatory or confused about where to seek treatment and to instruct them where the new staging area was.

Also any EMS units that might be disoriented or confused about where the staging was, because our communications -- the tactical frequencies were so busy that there was a lot of

miscommunication going on at that point. I think we were not only rescuers at that point but we were a way of communicating to the other units where to regroup.

My partner and I started to walk south down West Street and tried to answer as quickly as we could the questions of the people who were ambulatory on the street. All we could basically tell them is just keep walking north, keep walking and you'll see additional EMS resources and the police staging area. Your best bet is just to keep walking as far away from the event, because we're really not sure of what's going on.

We must have gotten two to three blocks south of Chambers Street, and I was still in awe of this spectacle that I'm witnessing. My partner and I were looking at tower two, and we're looking at I guess 20 stories -- 15 to 20 stories down from the top of the roof just in flames and smoke.

Then we hear a rumble, and we see a blast of smoke and a slight ball of flame coming out from the silhouette of the building, and we watched the antenna collapse into the building.

To be honest with you, for about five seconds or so I was transfixed. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. From our perspective, it looked as though the antenna was falling towards us, north.

We were motionless for maybe five seconds, until we realized that, hey, the building's coming down and now we've got to run for our lives. We turned at that point and told everybody else, "Listen, the building is collapsing. Run, run, run."

I guess had the building toppled north and not collapsed into itself, we probably would have been victims in the road too, because we were close enough for that to have occurred.

We sprinted for a good two to two and a half blocks through a mass of people who were running at various rates of speed. All we could really do is just tell people to just get out of the way, run, keep running north.

We were initially looking for shelter. I believe there was a school on the right-hand side. All the doors, the accesses, were locked. We still felt as though we were in the path of the debris. I looked over my shoulder once and

saw the cloud of debris coming up the street and particulate matter bouncing all over. At that point we still weren't certain that we were safe.

We ran just as fast as we could, and we tried to seek shelter. Me personally, I know myself and one thing I feel good about is I didn't push anybody out of the way. It was everybody for themselves.

After about two minutes of stark terror, then we realized that the blunt of the debris had already fallen and we were relatively safe. But there was still the dust, the smoke, the noise, the confusion and the panic on some of the civilians. But we knew we were relatively safe.

Then the reality hit me that at that point we were witnessing, maybe not directly, but we knew hundreds of people must have perished at that moment. That was a sobering feeling. But you also thank God at that moment that you were able to survive or carry on or what set of circumstances allowed you to persevere.

When we got to approximately Chambers Street, there was a lot of noise and we even

heard shots. I've heard shots in Brooklyn before. I couldn't fathom what was going on unless maybe an officer fell and his weapon discharged or maybe they saw some people trying to loot.

There were some windows blasted out, and we didn't know what had actually transpired at that point. But I'm told there were probably some officers that were firing to seek refuge in some of the locked buildings that I think was an adjacent school. They probably saved a lot of people from being in the direct debris path. At least that's what I'm told. I didn't know it on that particular day.

After about ten minutes or so, things were unbelievably quiet. People regrouped, regathered. We made contact again with the EMS supervisors that were there, and we set up an additional triage area. We tried to restructure the triage area in I think Borough of Manhattan Community College on the north side of the building. A makeshift triage area was set up on the upper mezzanine.

At that point myself and some volunteer

EMTs and some people who I believe responded to the area from the voluntary hospitals started to man that location. We treated one or two police officers for dust inhalation and exhaustion.

There was one young girl that was obviously in a state of total disbelief and severe anxiety. We examined her for any serious injuries. She just had some minor cuts and bruises. I think she was like all of us. She just couldn't believe the events that transpired and the circumstances that she was in the middle of.

Shortly after that, I would say maybe about 15 minutes after setting up that area, we were instructed to evacuate that area and move further north to another safe location up by Chelsea Pier on 23rd Street because there was a report of a gas leak.

So now we had to retrieve all the equipment that we had now deployed and put it back into the trucks, the trucks that were accessible to us, and move quickly up north.

At this point there were two or three EMTs on my truck. My partner, Barry Hirsch,



because of his training with special operations, he had gone with Lieutenant Santiago, and they had separated. He said that he would be back in a few minutes because they were going to see if they could coordinate and regroup and see what EMS units were in need of assistance further south.

At this point, under the instruction of one of the lieutenants at the scene, we started to move the truck up north. There were a few civilians that were not as spry as some of the younger people, and we opened our doors and let them in. We transported them as far north as we could without jeopardizing their well-being. We let them exit at the Chelsea Piers.

After that, that's basically where our unit remained until later that afternoon. I stayed and hooked up with one of the medics that I know from the academy, since I only had one partner at that point.

I was with Tommy Maher until about 5:00, 5:30 in the afternoon. Then we were released from the scene. From there I got back to Battalion 58 and dropped Tommy off and knew

they were going to get off the scene.

Q. When you were up on Chambers and West, that's where you encountered Lieutenant Fenton and Captain Pinkus; right?

A. Yeah, Lieutenant Pinkus, Lieutenant Pinkus.

Q. Oh, communications; do you know?

A. Maybe it's another Pinkus.

Q. Okay.

A. I know he's from -- I know it's a Lieutenant Pinkus, and he's from Metropolitan.

Q. When you were going south with your partner on West, do you recall how far, or what street you got to?

A. We probably were somewhere between Barclay and Murray or down around Warren Street, somewhere over there. I know we were -- let's see, Chambers -- we may have gotten down about here, I would say down around Murray and Barclay.

Q. Do you recall anything on your way down there, meeting up with any other EMS personnel along there that you remember?

A. There might have been some personnel, but we didn't really have an encounter with them

because they basically were responding north, and that was our instructions, to tell any units that were on West Street to respond north and where to respond. So we were assuming that all they had to do was continue north and they would run into the new staging area.

Q. Right.

Other than Lieutenants Fenton and Pinkus, do you remember any other officers up at Chambers?

A. No, they were the two officers that -- there may have been more, but those are the officers that I actually had conversations with.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you'd like to add?

A. I guess the only thing that I can say is that after the events of that morning, the tragedy, I get up every morning and I appreciate waking up more every morning. I appreciate my family more, my wife.

My heart goes out to all those families that even today have no closure on the whereabouts, and may never have closure. I'm saddened just to think about the evil which

wrought this type of devastation.

My coworkers and associates, I hope  
that they will not have died in vain.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1644,  
and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110116

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RENAE O'CARROLL

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 18th. I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm at EMS Battalion 39 in the lounge. The time is 1603 hours. We're conducting an historical interview with EMT Renae O'Carroll from working unit 39 Mary 2 on September 11th.

Q. Renae, tell us your story.

A. My partner Eddie Rodriguez and I logged on that morning at 8:00 39 Mary. Our first call came about 8:20 that morning -- no, more like 8:35, downtown Brooklyn. The call was a dupe to another unit's job. I can't remember. I think it was a 31 unit. I'm not sure.

We gave our position to the dispatcher that we were 98. We looked up and we saw this big mound of smoke. We turned the radio on, and we heard a lot of screaming and noise on the radio. We pulled over, went into a laundromat, because we saw a lot of people crowded around a television. That's where we saw what was going on.

We called up the dispatcher. It was really hard to get through. We went on Manhattan

frequency. That was the only one that was working. We told them that we would like to go down there and help if they needed anyone else.

Q. Right.

A. They said, "Yes, we were trying to call you, we didn't hear you, to send you over there."

We went down Atlantic Avenue going towards the Manhattan Bridge, and the heat was so intense, so intense, you could actually feel it while you were up on the bridge. I mean that intense you could feel the heat. Cars were coming this way, and we were driving that way.

They assigned us to go to Church and Vesey. We were going towards that area. The cars are coming this way. People are screaming and running, and we're going the opposite direction into the mess, into the belly of the beast of this thing. I still can't believe I had the nerve to do that to this day.

We got down there, and the scene was just horrendous. I've never seen anything like this before in my life. You were kind of afraid, but you knew you had a job to do. You knew there were people in there.

We went to the corner of Church and Vesey. That's where they had staging at. We were the third vehicle in line, one of the first units actually down there. The lieutenant there just said feel around and pick up whoever you can.

Q. You don't know who the lieutenant was, do you?

A. I can't remember.

At that point it was just mass hysteria down there. Nothing was really organized, because the mounds of people were just running all over the place. You were just picking up people that you saw screaming. That's how horrendous the scene was down there. We had our staging area, but because of the mass amounts of people -- you had FBI, you had police officers, you had corrections. You had everyone who was anyone down there.

We grabbed three people off of the ground. We had an elderly lady. She looked like she was burnt. At that time there was really no triaging. You were just pulling out of the mounds of people those that looked like they were



viable.

We had three ladies, one elderly. She looked like she might have been burnt, maybe heat-related, and two other ones. One was ambulatory, and the other two weren't. We grabbed them and put them in the vehicle. My partner said, "Close the door and let's go."

We were down there for maybe 11 minutes before the building fell. My partner Eddie said, go to the front and let's get out of here. I said we're going to go. At that point --

Q. The building actually came down at that point?

A. The building wasn't down yet. I was getting ready to pull out, and the transportation officer waved me over. He wanted to tell me what hospital to go to.

Q. Right.

A. I had my back turned towards the building, because we were directly in front of the building at Church and Vesey. I had my back to him. He was facing the building, looking over my shoulder. He looked up, and he had the look of fear on his face.

I heard something that sounded like marbles crashing down. At that point I looked behind me. I heard everyone say run. I looked behind me, and it was a gigantic blob of ash and molt and fire and everything just behind you, and I ran. Everyone was running.

I tried to grab people. People was grabbing on to me. We were just running, running, running. I have never seen anything like that before. I understand what someone says I looked death in the face. That was death coming to me. That's all I know.

I'm running. I'm ahead of it. Everyone's running, and it's just a stampede. I'm about ten feet in front of it, running, actually sprinting because I'm an athlete and I'm running. What happened when I got to the corner, because I remember my feet hitting, coming off the sidewalk, another blob of stuff came around.

Ash came around another building in front me, and it caught me in front of me and in back of me, and everything was pitch-black. Where it hit me from the front and the back, it actually lifted me off the ground and threw me.

It was like someone picked me up and just threw me on the ground.

Everything was pitch-black. You couldn't see anything. All I saw was big bolts of fire, fire balls. I could feel the heat around me. It was pitch-black. I couldn't see anything at all. My lungs, my airways, everything filled up with ash. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't see anything.

I got back off of the ground, and I'm moving around. I heard people screaming, begging for help. I could feel something on my ankle; I don't know what it was. It was pitch-black, and I'm feeling. At this point I walk into something, and it knocked me on the ground again. I don't know what it was, but I hit my forehead on something.

It was just basically dark. I had never been through anything -- I thought I was dying. The only thing I could see was balls of fire, just balls of fire. At one point I thought I was on fire because it was that close to me. I could feel the heat. I said to myself, wow, I'm on fire. This is what it feels like to be on

fire. I don't know what it feels like to be on fire. I thought that's what it feels like to be on fire.

At this point I couldn't breathe anymore. I lie on the ground. I couldn't even get up. I couldn't move. I couldn't do anything. I thought I was dying. That's basically it. I thought that I was dying.

At this point I laid down, and I started saying my prayers. Having memories of my kids, my mother, people at work. I mean, my whole life is just flashing in front of my eyes. What they say is true, everything is just flashing. I accepted it, because I didn't feel I could move on. It took the wind out of me and everything.

I just lie there and I was praying. I looked up to my left, and I saw a light opening up in the sky. I figured that maybe the ashes and stuff is clearing a break. It was a beautiful day out. The day was sunny, bright and warm. I remember very well, it was a beautiful day.

I looked up and it didn't seem like the

sky; it seemed like a different type of light. Whatever this light was I was looking at, it made me feel safe and secure. I felt that that was the light that everyone's talking about. I said to myself at that moment I guess this is the light, I guess this is my time. I felt it was opening up and it was my time to go.

I didn't have any fear. Whatever fear I had prior to that, I didn't feel it. I just felt safe like someone was cradling me, and I accepted it. I was getting ready to die. I was losing my breath. Something told me -- I looked to the left on the ground, and I saw a red light. I don't know what that was. I'm thinking it's another light.

I can laugh about this now. At that time I couldn't laugh about it. I couldn't laugh about it.

And that's when I put my hand to the left to see what that light was, and I felt glass. What happened to me was just a miracle. The glass door opened up. It was a door. It opened up. It opened up, and it felt like someone put their hands under me just pulled me,

picked me up and pulled me.

I rolled down some stairs, and the door behind me closed. Down there it was a basement to somewhere. I remember there was a subway station that I ran past. I figured maybe it was the other side of the subway station.

The first thing I saw when I got up was a bucket of mop water. I needed to clean my eyes out. I took and I put the mop water in my face. I felt, whatever's in this water, if that didn't kill me, this is not going to. I took and I washed my face off just to see, because I couldn't breathe and I was blind. I could feel my J.V.D. My neck was rigid. I felt that I was still dying.

I felt around. I could see only maybe half a foot in front of me, half a foot in front of me. I'm doing like this, and I'm feeling. I saw something that said "men." It was a men's room. I couldn't get the door open. It had a padlock just like this station door. I couldn't open it up.

There was one that said ladies' room across there, and I started saying, "God, how am

I going to get in here? You brought me in this far. You're going to let me die down here?" I started questioning him, "Why didn't you let me die with everybody else up there? Why bring me down here?"

What happened next was very amazing. From out of nowhere I just pressed the numbers 325, and the door opened up. And that's the same numbers that we have on the station door.

Q. On the station lock.

A. 325. That was the only numbers I could think of. I couldn't think of any other numbers to a padlock. It opened up.

When I got inside of there, there was water. I turned the water on, and I washed my face. I cleared my airway out. I made myself vomit to get the stuff out of me. I cleared my nose out. I did that again. I looked in the mirror to make sure that I didn't have any more J.V.D., and that was going away and I was able to breathe better now.

I drank some water. Now I really needed to flush my eyes, but the water wasn't coming out fast enough in the faucet. So what I

did, I went and kneeled down over the toilet. I figured if upstairs didn't kill me, the toilet water is not going to kill me either.

I kneeled on it and I put my hand on the flush and I let the water go down. As it was coming up, I washed my eyes out, and I was able to see around me. I looked around and saw I was in a bathroom and that it had vents up there and that there was no smoke in there.

I wet paper towels and put it around the door. I was exhausted at this point. I lie down. I found out later on when I lie down and I went -- I don't know if I lost consciousness or what. I went to sleep. I found out later that's when the other building fell. Because when I was down there, that was the first building that fell.

Q. Right.

A. I tell you, it's amazing. It's really amazing. When I woke up, I don't know how -- they told me I was missing seven or eight hours. I don't know. I was asleep. I was asleep. I was asleep a long time.

I got up. I had no sense of time. I



got up, and I start thinking what should I do? I need to get out of here. I closed the door and I checked the numbers again to make sure I wasn't dreaming. It opened up. I was afraid to close it. I put something there.

Q. To hold the door open?

A. Yeah, because I knew I needed to get back there. Just so I wouldn't lose my way when I go running around, I took some tissue paper and I laid it out.

Q. A trail of bread crumbs?

A. Yeah, I did. I made a trail to find out where -- so I could get back there, because that was a safe haven for me. There was no smoke or anything.

I found out it was a boiler room, because it had an engineering door and it had a padlock on it. Then there was another one that said electrical. It was basically a work area on the side of the subway station.

I found an open window. I went to it to get some fresh air. I was afraid. There was nobody down there but me. It was dark, pitch-black, except a little light in the corner.

I should have been afraid, but I really wasn't, to be honest, because I felt now God was with me. He brought me through all of this and there was a reason I'm here and I didn't fear I was going to die at this point, just how to get out of here.

Q. Right.

A. I couldn't remember how I got in there. I didn't remember.

I saw some stairways. I went up the stairways. The door wasn't open on the first floor. I went up another flight. It wouldn't open. The third floor let me in. On the third floor was two glass doors to an office. I saw a phone. I'm trying to get in there, but it was closed. It had a doorbell on it, and I rang the doorbell, like somebody's going to be there to open it; right? Like somebody is going to open it for me. I'm ringing it.

I saw a fire extinguisher, and I'm trying to get it out of the glass. I had nothing on me. My radio had fallen, everything. I didn't have my cell phone on me. I couldn't get in, because I was going to crack the door if I could get to the phone to call somebody.

At this point I was still tired. I wasn't breathing the way I should. I was still a little tired. So I went back downstairs, following the trail, and I went back in there and I went back to sleep. I don't know when I got up again. I don't know. I got up again, and I said I better go back out there again.

I felt a little more rested. I was breathing a little better. I walked the opposite direction this time, and that's the way that I found my way out.

Q. To the top of the street?

A. Yeah, because that was the glass door. When I looked out there -- I got there, and I looked out there. It looked like hell. There were there on the ground. No, there were parts on the ground. There was metal on the ground. It was ashes and everything. It looked like a third-world country. You had people running, screaming. Ambulances at this time was running one man.

I opened the door and did like this, and someone grabbed my hand. A police lady grabbed my hand, and she dragged me. I said,

"Help me. I can't really breathe." She was crying and everything like that. We were pretty much holding each other up.

She jumped out in the street, and an ambulance -- it was a private ambulance, maybe Cabrini or New York Hospital. I'm not sure. At this point they were riding one man with the doors open and no equipment and whoever could jump in jumped in.

She took me and she threw me in the bus. She threw me in the bus. The guy said, "Get in and let's go." She threw me in there, and I said, "Please come with me." I grabbed her hand. She said, "I can't. I have to stay." I have to stay and help people. She couldn't breathe herself.

I wish I could see her again one day, a little small thing.

Q. You have no idea who she was?

A. I don't know who she was. I don't know who she was. I got in there. She might have been an angel. I don't know who she was.

The ambulance made two more stops with the door open. No equipment in the back. He's

riding one man. He's got ashes on him himself.

Q. At this time how late was this? Do you have any idea?

A. I don't know.

Q. No concept of time?

A. I had nothing. I don't know anything. I didn't know anything until I got to the hospital.

At this point he stopped to let two more people in, a police officer, an Officer Palono from the first transit -- from District 1, I think it was. I don't know. He came in. He was saying, "I can't breathe." I found one pediatric oxygen mask. I turned it on, and I gave it to him.

Q. Right.

A. I helped him. I put it on him and told him it's going to be okay. I'm not all right myself. I said, "You're going to be okay." I said, "Let's pray." Then they stopped and another elderly lady, I grabbed her hand, pulled her in and shared the mask between the two of them.

Q. Right.

A. We laid back there, just on the floor, sat there and prayed.

The ambulance pulled up to -- I found out later it was Beekman Hospital. There someone opened the door, and they grabbed us out. They just grabbed people out and threw you on a stretcher. The first thing they did was to make sure your airway was clear. Then what they did after that was take you and throw you in the shower to wash all of this stuff off.

I still had no concept of time. I didn't know what time it was. It was still daylight. But because of all the ash and everything flying around, it looked like it was nighttime.

Being in the hospital, it was like being on a conveyer belt. You went from one room to the next. They sent you from there to -- from the shower they sent you to another room where you got your eyes -- they put drops in your eyes. Then they sent you back to the airway room. There must have been a thousand people in each room. They were going down the line, actually putting drops in everyone's eyes.

It was just the worst day that -- I hope to God I never go through anything like that again. I've never seen anything like this before, never, never, never.

The job tries to prepare you for stuff like this, but for something like that there is really no way of preparing somebody for this; there really isn't. You wouldn't think in a million years something like that would happen.

Q. Right. What happened with your partner?

A. I don't know. I thought he was dead.

Q. You lost touch with him at that point, and that was it?

A. I didn't even remember anything about him. I don't know. I didn't remember anything. I didn't remember anything. I don't know what even happened. All I know is I saw a blob of smoke, and that was it. I don't know. I felt something lift me up and down the stairs. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know anything.

I remember my belt, my belt with my pink scissors. The building I was in, where I

made the trail, my belt is down there with the pink scissors on it. So if ever they find it, that's where I was.

Q. That's where you were.

A. Yes, I sure did.

I was in the hospital I don't even know how many hours. Finally I made my way to a phone. They made an announcement that the phones were up, that there's one phone on each floor that the patients can use. I was on a line of maybe 80 people.

When it got to be my turn, I called to let them know I was okay. The lieutenant was on there. He was crying. The captain was on the phone, Captain Medeiros. He was crying. I was crying.

That's basically it. I stayed in the hospital, and a unit brought me back to Division 4. I took a shower there. I cleaned up. They gave me a towel. I didn't have anything on. The only thing I had left of mine was my boots.

Someone brought me from there back to Brooklyn, and the whole station, everyone from all three tours was there. When I came, they



were clapping, and we all cried. It was just beautiful.

But I'm glad that I was there and they weren't, because it might have turned out differently.

Q. Right, right.

A. It wasn't my time to go. That's all it is.

That's it. That's my story.

Q. That's a story all right.

A. Yeah.

I went back down there two weeks later to help out at the morgue, because it was really bothering me. I had to go back down there, because I felt I ran away the first time. This time I had to go back and face it. I had to have some closure. I had to go back down there and face it.

I went back down there, and I said I'll work staging, because I had to get over that fear. They said, "No, you're going to the morgue." I was in the morgue for 22 hours. 22 hours. I had to get back there and face whatever it was.

Q. Right.

A. I know if something like that happens again I'll just have to do my best. I'll probably still react the same way. While people are running out, I'll just go towards it. That's it.

Do you have any questions to ask me?

Q. No.

A. That's it.

Q. Nothing else you want to say, that's it. Renae, thanks very much for your interview, quite a story.

A. It is.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview is concluded at 1625 hours.

File No. 9110118

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MARK MAZUR

Interview Date: October 19, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 19th, 2001. I am Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0651 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT MAZUR: Mark Mazur, EMS command, shield 3613.

MR. RADENBERG: We are conducting the interview at the Division 4 office, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

A. Pretty much that day started like any other normal day. I logged in at 6:00 in the morning. Around 8 or so I was monitoring citywide radio. One of the officers heard all the commotion going on on citywide.

I called my counterparty, who was on the road with the LSU truck. So we could man the MERV van, and that was specialist Bobby Short.

When he came in, we went downstairs. We were watching the TV and found out that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. So we load up the MERV van with new equipment that it needed in the truck, stuff like that, the ALS equipment.

I threw my equipment in the LSU truck.

We met Assistant Chief Pete Carrasquillo at the division. He loaded up his car with the duty captain and his aides, and they went up to -- they were going down to the event. They told us to relocate to Battalion 45 Woodside, wait for Lieutenant Hadala and any personnel that come down to respond into the event.

Pretty much the radio was -- all you heard was like commotion going on. You couldn't get through to the dispatcher, because they knew that LSU 4 and MERV van 4 were responding in. We finally got through to them for that.

We were coming over the 59th Street bridge. We were looking over at the towers, and you could actually see the people jumping. At first I thought it was funny, because you see these little X's coming off. You say, "What the hell are these things?" You're thinking then those X's are people coming off.

As we were coming over the last bit of the 59th Street Bridge, tower one collapsed. The radio pretty much went dead. When we came in, I

tell you, what helped us out the most was the traffic department. You know, those guys are always made fun of. They had everything shut down, and we had such a breeze coming over the bridge. The traffic was shut down.

When I hit 57th Street, everything was shut down and we just came down like gangbusters. When we respond with a MERV, we need two escort vehicles, because that thing doesn't go fast enough. So if you try not to stop it, you can get there faster. So we were blocking streets.

We got to the West Side Highway, and we saw a lot of people walking down. When we arrived 84 at the scene, where the first, I guess, staging area was, a lot of firemen there. Everybody was packing up and getting their hose packs and bottles and stuff like that, and walking down.

Q. Do you remember what street that was?

A. West Side Highway.

Q. And the cross street?

A. Not offhand. If I looked on this little thing that you have here, if that's the foot bridge, it had to be the first one by Warren

Street. Then Warren Street, we crossed over the other side of West Side Highway. We came down the opposite side of the West Side Highway facing out, because we had a bunch of fire apparatus that were parked all the way down.

So we stayed on the other side to come up, and then we crossed over by Vesey. That's where the MERV was. We started staging up over here.

Lieutenant Hadala and his command car came on the other side of the West Side Highway with me, and then I parked just on the other side of that foot bridge by Stuyvesant School, I guess it is.

Q. Stuyvesant, I believe, is up here by Chambers.

A. Then it's this --

Q. This is the American Express.

A. That's what we did. The white foot bridge that comes over?

Q. Right.

A. Yeah, okay, I was just on the other side of this, and I crossed back over. Over here you had a bunch of fire apparatus that was on the

south side of the street. What I did was I nosed my truck in between them, because I needed the back doors of my truck, I don't need the front.

Q. Right.

A. Then, again, I noticed firemen carrying hose packs, bottles and stuff like that.

After I parked my truck, I started taking my equipment out and all of a sudden I heard this sound. It sounded like a jet, a high, whistling sound. There was like a rumble behind it. It was like a jet with a locomotive behind it.

I heard people screaming. All of a sudden, the firemen that were behind me were throwing their hose packs down. When I came out of the back of the truck, I looked up and I saw the second tower coming down. The second tower was coming down.

Everybody just started to run down the West Side Highway. So with this I jumped out of the truck. A police car was coming up. It was snaking the traffic like I did. He stopped behind my truck, threw it in reverse and was going back. I jumped on his hood, because I



can't run that fast. I rode that for about a hundred feet. He hit a car, and when he hit the car, I rolled off the hood again and I just kept on running down the street.

Q. Was he going back up north?

A. Yeah. When the building came down, it had to be like a ten-story dust cloud or storm that came after us, and you didn't know what the hell was in there. All you saw was papers and you could see like the light in the papers. You didn't know if it was glass or whatever. It just turned the whole street dark, and it just came over. The best I could describe it is like a tidal wave that was coming towards us.

By the time I stopped running, it was like Barclay or -- you really couldn't tell, because when it hit you, it actually knocked you down, the motion of that pressure behind that. When I got up, there was dirt and dust everywhere. You really couldn't see. You couldn't breathe.

I made it back to the LSU truck. I had about, I'd say, 10 to 15 firemen in the back of my truck. They were bewildered. They didn't

know what to think. So I pulled my multi-laters out of the back with these subway manifolds, so you can give multiple O2.

Q. Right.

A. I hooked them up, and I started to give a O2 to everybody. I pulled all my masks out, so I gave them masks to guys that were still trying to get up to the scene, to rescue people.

Pretty much it was pandemonium going on. You could hear -- the thing was, I'm a fireman, a volunteer fireman. You could hear the pass alarms going off, all over the place. You didn't know what you had.

I was working there, there was a Hazollah truck that was right across from me. They were giving care to everybody. I was working with a guy from Hazollah, and you hear these explosions going off. It was crazy because -- what the hell was going on?

A fire lieutenant or EMS lieutenant -- I don't know, you couldn't tell because he was covered with dust. He came up to me and said, "Does this truck run?" I don't know. It was covered with papers from the World Trade Center

and dust. He said, "If it runs, get out of here; if it don't, then abandon the truck and just get out of here. We don't know if we're going to lose the whole area, because there were gas leaks under the sewer caps in the sewers."

So what I did is I took everything that I had out. I threw it in the back of the truck. The last patient I had was a Port Authority female. She was encrusted in this thing, in the dust. She couldn't see. I put her in the front seat.

I got my truck started. I backed out and then we pulled down the West Side Highway until we hit a safe area, which I don't know where it was. They had a fire hose hooked up on a stanchion like a shower. I took her out and hosed her off.

We ran into my friend Bobby from LSU -- from our MERV van. Both of us moved our trucks all the way down until we ran into two lieutenants and Commissioner Claire. We asked him, "Where do you want us to go?" Trucks are needed, we're getting back in service. He said, "Wait here," and just kept on walking. He really

didn't know what -- again, we were all -- nobody knew what was going on. We had no real command stations.

Q. So you don't remember where that was that you met up with him?

A. There was a restaurant there, Ponte's at Desbrosses Street. We were up by Desbrosses Street. That's where we were. I went to that restaurant one time.

Q. North of Chambers?

A. Yeah.

While we were there -- when that blast hit, that pretty much blew everything out of the MERV van. What we did, we got the MERV van operational and got all the equipment back on, put it where it was supposed to be, got it dusted out as best as possible.

We pulled the equipment out of the LSU truck, because it had like two inches of dust inside, the multi-laters were covered with dust. I blew all the regulators out. Now that was back in service again. Pretty much just threw all the big debris that we had in the truck out. My cab was filled because the windows were open.

The only thing that saved my truck was because I angled in when I pulled in between those trucks because everybody that was next to me blew their windshields out of their trucks. They got really blasted. Mine, I had papers and stuff like that inside, and dust and sand. But it saved my truck.

Once we were at that staging area by Desbrosses Street, we used my cell phone, because it was the only one that was working. Communications was screwed. We got in touch with citywide. They deployed us to Greenwich Street and somewhere down, I think. Is Greenwich on here?

Q. No.

A. Greenwich would be like up in here. I think this was Greenwich. They sent us to Greenwich Street. We reported over there and set up a treatment area. Greenwich Street and Murray, right over here. There was I think some kind of school or office building.

We set up a treatment area utilizing the equipment from the LSU and MERV van. We had a bunch of doctors from all around the country,

really. There were all kind of doctors. They were here for a seminar.

Q. Right.

A. They shipped the seminar down there and over to us. So we begin working over there. Again, we were just like covered with all the dust and crap and all.

Then the third building fell. That was over here.

Q. That was number seven, I believe.

A. There were a bunch of people standing on the corner of Greenwich and Murray Street. It was funny because we had two lieutenants who I didn't really know. All of a sudden when the building came down, it started stampeding all the people. When the people started stampeding, he said, "Go out there and slow them down."

Did you ever see Animal House?

Remember that guy? I had that shot in my mind. I said, "You've got to be crazy." I'm a big guy. These people are out there trampling. So I stood on the back of my truck, holding onto the door rails saying, "Slow down, everybody." People were getting stomped in front of us. Then that

stopped.

We were there I'd say till about 8:30, 9:00. Then they moved us over to the Battery Park side. They wanted the LSU and MERV over to there, the treatment area.

That out of the whole deal has to be the most scariest part of the whole deal, because when we picked up -- you have to picture -- I don't know if you were there -- how heavy the dust and dirt was. When night came, it was just dark, no lights in that area. They had us driving all different side blocks to try to get on the other side of the World Trade Center.

So we were driving down this one block -- again, I don't know the names. I was following in the MERV. It was smoky, dusty, and you could hear a mouse it was so quiet. It was really eerie.

When we came up this block we saw burned out fire trucks, crushed ambulances, burned-out police cars. It looked like downtown Beirut. Plus you had fire hoses all over the place. We were jumping over fire hoses with the vehicles. The headlights didn't work because it

was so dark.

All of a sudden you see silhouettes of firemen pop up. Guys like walking away from the battle. They're like, "Hey, brother, how ya doing? Got any water?" They were just wiped out at that point. It's like, "Yeah, I've got a water here." You hand it out of the truck.

It was the most eeriest feeling. You couldn't tell what was in front of you. You didn't know if there was another building like leaning over. You can see all these crushed cars and vehicles. What's up above me?

Q. Right.

A. They put us on the opposite side, the Battery Park side. They had us park in front of a building. Then a bunch of people came up and said, "You have to move your truck because this building is going to collapse." I think it was the American Express building. It was unsafe or leaning, or something like that.

So they backed me up by the water. Again, I don't know the street, those Battery Park buildings, you know.

Q. Yeah.



A. Those high condos or apartments. It was right on the water. We backed down this block and we got the MERV and the LSU set up and had a bunch of ambulances coming.

That night we were there about -- we got down at that point about 11:00. We finally got released from there -- we set up the treatment area about 4:30 in the morning, quarter to 5. Then we were sent up to the command post back on the West Side Highway.

We got released about 7, 7:00. It was a pretty long day. I came in around 6. So I was on borrowed time on that.

Q. When you were here by West and Vesey, by the pedestrian bridge, do you remember, aside from Bobby Short, any other EMS personnel, or officers, that were there?

A. No. Oh, by the time I got done running, you had Tony Dimao, who's from M.T.D. You had Mike Felice from M.T.D., deputy director, the motor transport division. It was funny, because when I got done running from that blast, I turned around and said Tony -- because you couldn't see the block anymore. I turned around

to Tony Dimao -- we're always fighting to get a new truck. I think I need a new truck by now.

He looked down the block and said, "I think so." I know he went back down again, Tony Dimao and Felice because they got an engine -- they got a truck and a rescue truck out before we lost them, the trucks themselves. Unfortunately the personnel was still in the building. He told me when they moved the trucks they had to move some EPA escort. The guy moved it and he said, "Well, that's almost a million dollars of equipment they were trying to get saved and get out." It's like a \$7,000 high-tech (inaudible).

Anything else I ran into? Again, I had the Hazollah guys there with me. That's -- Hadala, Tony Dimao, Mike Felice. I think I took care of their boss. I don't know who their boss is. I don't know if he was in charge of -- in charge of fleet, because he had a knee injury. I took care of him when I went to that safe area and got the shower.

Q. Right.

A. I gave him some ice packs because his knee was all swollen.

Again, we didn't know what was going on. When we responded in, we only knew a plane. We didn't know about a second plane hitting. We saw the fire in the two towers, when we came off the 59th Street Bridge. We thought it jumped over, but we didn't know a second plane had hit.

When we responded in, we had the first tower went down. All we knew was that everybody was gone. Those are the people you work with, like my chief and everything, the duty captain and all. They were in front of us. They were at the command post. So we didn't know they were still around until about 7:00 that night.

I called up my division, this office, and talked to somebody, and they said, "Oh, no, we heard from this one, we heard from this one." The lieutenants we were working with down on Greenwich Street, they had no clue. As far as they knew, Chief Carrasquillo was missing, Captain Deshore was missing, Captain Rivera, Chief Brown's missing, Chief Mittleman's missing. He went down the whole list.

Then he said, "LSU is missing." I said, "Oh, stop there. I'm LSU. I know where I

am."

Q. There you go.

A. So we're back with the people again, because they thought we were gone. Their last dispatch was that we were 84, up on the West Side Highway up there. We rectified that.

After that they had me on the missing list when they screwed up on something else. That's when we called the division office and finally talked to somebody and found out everybody we worked with was pretty much still around.

Again, we didn't find out it was a terrorist attack until we went to that safe area by Desbrosses Street. Getting the truck set up, someone said, "Watch out for anymore aircraft." "What are you talking about?" We don't have AM-FM radios in our trucks.

They said, "Well, they hijacked so many planes and this is an attack on America. They attacked the Pentagon. We were totally clueless." "What are we talking about? What's going on?" They said, "Watch out for any aircraft. If you hear any aircraft, duck down."

All of a sudden we heard the helicopters. They were guys coming in from New Jersey, cobras, so they were our attack helicopters.

Q. Right.

A. Then about five minutes later what really scared the hell out of us, we heard a jet coming down. It was an F-16 that came roaring up the Hudson River. It's like where the hell did he come from? Then it sunk in, they weren't kidding, because I thought they were kidding us. They said no, we're under attack. I thought that was somebody's wild imagination.

All of a sudden this F-16 is whipping down the Hudson. I go, holy shit, this must be really happening. They are after us. Now the big boys are here. You don't see military jets flying over.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

Who was the duty captain?

A. Rivera.

Q. Rivera?

A. Yeah. He was trapped for a while.

Q. J.R.?

A. Yeah. First day in Queens. He was

happy too because I gave him a locker that day,  
and everything.

Q. Do you remember who the aides were?

A. Katz, Jason Katz and Sal Sangeniti.

Q. Sangeniti?

A. Yeah, an Italian guy. Sal Sangeniti is  
Chief Carrasquillo's aide. Jason Katz is Chief  
Day's aide. Chief Day is out with an arm injury.

Q. Chief Day was at --

A. He was not at the scene. He's been out  
with an arm injury. The captain in the division,  
he went in with Chief Carrasquillo, the captain  
and Sal.

Did you talk to Captain Deshore?

Q. Not yet.

A. She was trapped for a while. She was  
forward command. We thought we lost her. She's  
a tough German captain, so we figured we would  
find her in New Jersey. She got rescued on the  
boat.

Q. Right.

A. When the second tower came down --  
before the second tower came down, they got them  
off onto either a PD or fire boat. She was in

there with some people from the treatment area. We figured if she was in Jersey she was probably ordering people around. She's a tough captain.

That's pretty much everybody we worked with in Queens. A lot of Queens people were there. Unfortunately, we lost Carlos Lillo.

Q. Any thoughts or comments?

A. The thoughts, again, it was unfortunately an unforeseen tragedy. If it happened again today, pretty much we would have to do it the same way right now. I have a lot of friends that were in that building. Firemen on the job. All of us in that building would say, "We'll stay back here because it's safe."

We all came in knowing there's risk on this job and we know we have to go in there and get people out. They saved thousands of people. You can't imagine how many people they saved. Unfortunately they all lost their lives.

A building that big, you can't try to figure out every emergency that could happen to it.

Did you see that special on the History Channel?

Q. No. I have it on tape. I'm waiting.

A. Again, the guy said it. He said it in one sentence. He said, "You can't figure out kamikaze commercial jetliners." No way you can write that in the book. You can't plan for something like that.

Again, we got caught really bad this time. I don't think anybody acted out of the ordinary as far as bravery goes or doing their job. But they had to do what they had to do. Unfortunately to the end. If I had another job, would I hold back? No. It's not in me. If I was going to hold back, I wouldn't be on the job. It makes you really think, take stock in what you have.

Everybody did what they had to do. Communications could have been better, but it was hard because when we were coming up to the scene all you heard was those people trapped, over the command frequency and citywide. It gave you that much more adrenaline to get up there and try to get these people. When the second tower came down, you had enough.

The radios were pretty much dead. The



800 trunking radios were working very -- you know the 800 frequency?

Q. Right.

A. They were working very shabby. You had the repeaters on the World Trade Center. That's about it. The cell phones weren't working. Only AT&T was working.

But I got to admit, everybody stuck together. The system was working. I lost my beeper and my cell phone. I found the cell phone right away. It fell in the back of the truck when I jumped out. When I jumped on the police car, I must have lost my beeper in the Street.

It's funny, about a week ago the police property office, they called my Fire Department and said, "We have a beeper." They said they checked and have it assigned to a Mark Mazur, is he with your department. One of the guys there said, "Yeah, he works for the N.Y.C. Fire Department."

So they sent it in the mail. I got it back. It's all beat up. It's funny because I got my beeper back. I got my beeper back. Out of all that rubble and crap, I got a beeper back.

It's amazing, totally amazing. I was floored by that. I go, the system works. You figure thousands of people going around on the West Side Highway, thousands of people, trucks, and I got a beeper back. So the system works.

You had some cop down there in the property room, and he called up. Very weird. There's a reason why we are the biggest and the greatest department going. You start thinking of more and more stuff as far as when we pulled up there, the debris that was there, and unfortunately the people.

Fortunately I wanted to work really hard to take care of patients. That's the downside of it, the way that treatment area was set up, we were waiting for thousands of patients. They never came. If they arrived, they arrived on the other side.

That's it.

Q. Thank you.

A. Thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0721.

The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110119

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GREGG HADALA

Interview Date: October 19, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. HADALA

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 19, 2001.

The time is 0558 eight hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Gregg Hadala, Lieutenant, EMS command, Shield 387.

Q. Of EMS Battalion 50. We are currently at EMS Battalion 50. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Start with --

A. Okay, I was conditions 54 that morning, covering my regular area. We started hearing about a plane into the towers. I was with another unit on a call and we were listening on Department radios and the news radios, something was going on. I figured maybe a little plane, an accident and we found out it was much worse than that. I wasn't sent in on it. I was in the area. I was by -- sending messages that I could respond to that area, do you want to send me. I wanted to get a view so I went by 69 Street and Grand Avenue.

You could see the whole tower was on fire and stuff, both towers were still up at that time. People were pulling over in their cars and looking at it and everybody's like in shock. I waited by 69 Street before I -- people were getting out of my way and

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stuff. I didn't even have my lights or anything, I was just driving regular and like everyone was like listening to their radios in their cars. They were sending the MERV-4 vehicle, that's the big bus outside.

Finally after an hour they were sending it and I knew it would be hard for them to get by in the traffic and stuff, so I escorted, escorted them in to Manhattan, to get over there so then they put me on the job.

We took Queens Boulevard -- we had to wait by BN. 45, between the LIE and Queens Boulevard over there. Rather than send them in, they said wait there for some reason. So all right. I escorted them over to Queens Boulevard to the 59 Street Bridge, over on 57th Street, shot over to the west side, and then downtown. I was like -- traffic was clear. They closed all the access roads to emergency, you know, emergency vehicles, so it was a clear sailing down there and as we were going down, everybody is evacuating from lower downtown. All the people are walking up in their suits and stuff, some were dusty. It was like an end of the world thing.

There was no direction really where we should

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go, where to set up. There were supervisors, officers, Chiefs, fire side, EMS side calling for help and like just cries for help. I think that's when the first tower went down. I figured that people were trapped, people were dying, were dead already. Let's see.

I must have pulled up somewhere about 15 minutes or so before the second tower came down. Came up the West Side Highway, past 23rd and 14th. There was like vehicles coming from all over. Staging. Some were going in, some were waiting. We wanted to get a little closer to treat patients, but not too close, so we wound up by Borough of Manhattan Community College, Chambers, a little past there. Not all the way to Vesey, but we could clearly see the tower in flames and stuff and a lot going on.

Just trying to size up what's going on. We were basically, you know, had to make our own decisions because there was no upper command there telling us -- giving direction or anything. It was like that for the rest of the evening, so we had to do our best. So let's take a look, what's going on. And so we grabbed some people to see if there were any injuries, and treated wherever. While I was doing that, they said look out, look out and the second tower crumbled and

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the shock wave and debris came. I had the big bus with me and another truck, the equipment truck. There was one medic with us.

Everybody took cover. Most of the people I was with, I didn't -- I was away from my vehicle. I was going to dive under a truck. It was a police truck and some guy was in it already. He said get in there. It's open. A Con Ed guy or something, so I rolled up the windows and the dust, the shock wave passed over. After a few minutes when the daylight came again, we got out and assisted anybody who wasn't able to take cover, and was covered with that stuff, and washed down some firefighters and police officers and EMS guys that were outside.

Then we can go back in the debris area and see injuries and stuff. Then they made us evacuate that area, they said there's another explosion, or said there's a gas leak and made us all head up towards like 14 Street. They told other units to go all the way up to 23 Street. Chelsea Piers. Apparently it became the staging area, so we got up to about 14th or so. I'm there, and you know, the big bus broke down so we had to clean her up a bit, because it got all dirty.

We got back going again and I let command

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know that I was back in service, where we were, they told us to get over to another location. I think was probably near Vesey and Trinity, somewhere on the other side, I guess most of the injuries were.

By the time they gave us that direction, came down, Chambers and a little past Chambers, I don't know. It might have been Barclay. We wound up stuck in traffic by another building where they had set up a hospital area. Whoever was in charge there just told us to park there and work with the docs and the nurses there. We were waiting for victims and stuff but they didn't come. We just treated some rescuers that got hurt trying to rescue, but we didn't get any more victims from the Trade Center.

We remained there for several hours. Then that night they directed us over to the Battery Park City side. All these streets here. Just across the street from the towers, Ground Zero, whatever they call it now, and the apartment buildings.

Q. Down around Albany and West?

A. Yes, somewhere over there, close enough that, you know, if they pull anybody out or any rescuers get hurt, we're there to treat them.

Q. Right.



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A. We were there till like about 5 in the morning. Washed down some guys, gave some oxygen. Finally were released 5 in the morning. They had set up some kind of command post on Chambers and West Street. There was an EMS Lieutenant and Captain there. I don't know where my vehicle is. I didn't know if it was still in one piece, whatever, you have to worry about de-conning it, whatever. They were like, yes, right.

Then I mentioned some missing equipment and all that. They were just like, whatever, go to your vehicle, go back to your station, go home. There were firefighters, Battalion Chiefs, like, you know, needing rides back to the Bronx and Harlem.

We were like full already. Just like -- I don't know -- maybe guys who lost their companies and stuff, they were just like, 6:00 in the morning. It was just like, you know, still just walking around. Got back, there were some extra personnel in the area. They de-conned the vehicles a little bit. That was it. Then we went back, you know, over time towards --

Q. Right. When you got in with the MERV to West and Chambers, do you know who else -- who was driving the MERV?

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A. Yes, it was EMT Short, Bobby Short.

Q. Short. Recognize anybody else that was up there?

A. A medic that came with them, Wilson DiBrianno. He had no partner or something, and was at the station and jumped on.

Q. DiBrianno is from 50?

A. Yes, yes. Also with us was the equipment truck guy, Mark Mazur. He drove LSU-4.

Q. Right. Was there, when you got to Chambers and West, was there any other EMS staging or command area set up there or were you the first guys to get there?

A. There was guys by 14 Street or so. I think we were like the first guys to push up towards Chambers Street and after it collapsed, all units came up, there was a couple of ambulances down there. Fire trucks from towns I didn't even recognize and ambulances.

Q. Was there any other EMS officers?

A. There was, yes, Lieutenant Pincus, and another guy, he is from Battalion 8. Another Lieutenant, a Spanish guy. I forgot his name, but he was in the area. Initially that's all I saw, no supervision. Later on after the collapse, I saw one of

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the Chiefs from our Division.

One of the Chiefs, he was there. He was doing whatever he had to do, he checked on us. I told him the MERV was down. It wouldn't start. We were trying to get it back together. I don't know who else. I saw one of the new Captains. She used to be here, Janice. They were taking her away in an ambulance. She was hurt. Olsz --

Q. Janice Olszewski, something like that?

A. Yes. I saw she was hurt, all covered in dust. She was stable. We were hearing things, this one is dead, this one is missing, that one is missing. Just frustration to see the tower on fire there and knowing that people are in there and rescuers went in. Firefighters, all those guys were in there. You know, when it collapsed, you said oh, man, it's like a lot of people just died.

There wasn't a lot of patients to treat. It was just, with something like that you figured it would be in the hundreds, thousands of casualties. Either you made it out or you didn't. That night you had to drive all around lower Manhattan to get to the other side there. You'd go walking down by the graveyard, all those areas around Battery Park City were all

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covered with that dust.

Q. Any particular event that stands out in your mind for -- or struck you as odd or anything like that?

A. Just actually the collapse and the sound it made. It was like a strange sound, rumbling, not the loudest thing you ever heard, not like a boom explosion type thing, but just strange. How fast it was collapsing, you just started running. Looking back and seeing all the pictures they got after and the videos they are showing over and over again. Pretty bad day.

Q. Yes. All right. Any other thoughts or comments you would like to add?

A. No, just as far as the medical staff was concerned. They were really not prepared, but nobody was. As far as like equipment, protective stuff, masks and stuff for the EMS crews, there was none after a while. The other stations, they had more stuff, that had no units involved. We didn't have much in the way of counseling and all that, checking on people's equipments and checking on us. You guys come down. It's like a month later finally seeing what happened, but we just felt that the EMS part could have been better organized and watched out for us a little better.

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We are still waiting to hear about, you know, nobody went down for medicals or anything after. Some of us got sick. We were exposed to what we were and you fill out this exposure report, send it down and get no call backs. We don't even know if they got it or not. If anybody has got problems later, it's a concern that I have heard from our personnel. And equipment and what else to expect. Like what's the plan. If something else happens what is our plan. What do we do. Bioterror or whatever. We used to have special units to go in. HAZTAC trucks and stuff.

Q. Right, ERS?

A. Yes, I mean talk about bad timing. I think that should be back on-line. Working closer with the fire side. I mean, you know. Everybody has to work together and even closer, because our safety, our lives are at stake. I really don't see that happening, to the extent that I think it should.

So the people who didn't make it and stuff, their families. They don't even know how many people were in the buildings and stuff. I don't think they'll ever know. I've just been like working in sectors, on overtime in the past weeks, just seeing very few whole bodies going out, pieces of people, shoes and clothing

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with some bones inside. I never saw anything like that.

Plus us police and firefighters on like 12 hour different tours. And they have been pushing us for over five weeks to run an extra unit. RCC says extra units, and this and that. Like yesterday, they tell me go down to the Trade Center in the morning. There's not enough people on overtime so they pull people from the station; ambulances, EMTs, and supervisors. So I get down there and they said oh, you are cancelled. We don't need you. Go back on patrol.

Two hours later they send me a message, report back down there. Went back to the city, and they called the command and Chief (inaudible) was in charge. Oh, what is he doing there. We don't need them now. Go back. You think a month later they would have it down how they want to do this.

Take an overview and catch up on things, recognize things that go well and try to tool up the things that didn't go good as far as organizing us, helping us out. That's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0618.

Interviewed is concluded.

File No. 9110120

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DOMINICK MAGGIORE

Interview Date: October 19, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick.

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 19. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force conducting an interview with Lieutenant Dominic Maggiore, EMS Battalion 50 in the kitchen of EMS Battalion 50. The time is 0640 a.m.

Q. And Dom, if you would be good enough, tell us your story.

A. I was at Employee Health Service when the first plane hit. I had just been cleared for full duty, because I was out with a broken toe. I was on modified duty for a couple of weeks when the first plane hit.

As I was on my way back to Battalion 50 from BHS, I saw the second plane hit the towers from the BQE. I came back to Battalion 50, and I got in the command car with Lisa DeSena, one of the division ALS coordinators, and Paramedic Chris Lefkaditis, and we responded in.

On the way in or around when we arrived at -- we first responded to the Staten Island ferry. Around the time that we first got there or on the way in, I'm not really sure, was when the first tower fell. When I got to the Staten Island ferry, there was one BLS unit there. Shortly after -- and I don't know which unit it



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was in the confusion.

Shortly after that, an ALS unit showed up, and we established the triage treatment area at the Staten Island ferry on the 2nd Floor of the ferry terminal. Communications was gone. Basically I used my cell phone to do all the -- most of the communication with citywide.

We set up a triage treatment area. As we established the area, you know, more resources started showing up. Somewhere along the way -- awhile later, Chief Basile came and took command of that area. It was, I would say, at least an hour or two into it by the time -- you know, we established the staging area, and the units started to respond to us.

Q. Right.

A. Basically we treated very few patients. The area -- it was mass confusion, because that was the staging point for the evacuation of downtown, so it took a bit of time and energy to get the area set up.

With that, we started getting voluntaries and volunteers, and we had probably 30, 40 beds set up, you know, with plenty of staff, medical staff doctors, and such.

I would say a little while after we were

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basically established, Dr. Cherson and Manny Delgado came in, and they get there shortly after the second tower fell, I think, because they were blown from the force of the tower falling. They were up there.

I don't know time frames. I really can't tell. A little while after that, Chief Brown came in. We wound up treating and transporting Chief Brown, because he was in the rubble.

A couple of hours into it, it was pretty obvious that we weren't getting too many patients at that location, and Lieutenant Phil Soto was up at the One Liberty Plaza screaming for help. He was right there. The rubble was -- actually, I got there, you know, a little while later. I took my command car and two medics that came with me, Lisa and Chris, and we went up to Liberty Plaza, and it was a mess.

It was just -- the rubble from the tower was on the stairs, on the Trinity side of One Liberty Plaza. By that time it was starting to get dark. It was starting to get dusk. I don't know whether it was the dust, or it was starting to get dark or a combination of both.

There were a bunch of basically volunteers. There were some Jersey units there, some private units

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there. I know particularly there was a girl Chris from somewhere in New Jersey who kind of set up like the triage treatment area in the lobby of One Liberty Plaza, and by the way, she did an excellent job.

When I got there -- Phil got there I guess a little bit before me, but he was more involved up on the rubble pile. I established the triage treatment. I, you know, kind of face-to-face with everybody. There was numerous doctors, numerous nurses, all volunteers. There were a bunch of people all over the place.

I spent a lot of my time fighting with these people to keep them away from the pile, because I had some serious concerns about it being stable, which unfortunately, later on, proved to be true, because there was a secondary collapse, which I think wound up taking the lives of a couple of the Port Authority officers who were in the rubble.

Somewhere during the course of the night -- I was there from daylight on Tuesday until about six o'clock, seven o'clock Wednesday morning, and somewhere -- during the course of the night, I had a problem with an Assist ambulance crew, that they were -- they had smuggled a reporter into ground zero

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in the back of their ambulance.

When I confronted them and tried to get some straight answers, they got a bit belligerent. So did the reporter, and I convinced him to leave the area.

Back to the other part with the rubble. We had units operating close to the rubble pile and a couple of times on the rubble pile. Lieutenant Soto and I agreed that that was not a good situation, and we tried to get the attention -- we got the attention of the fire supervisors, and I think they kind of backed off to the edge of the rubble pile and were proceeding a little bit more cautiously.

We pulled out I think about two or three more patients during the course of the evening. Dr. Gonzalez had shown up, because there was a bunch of problems, you know, with doctors staying off the pile, people, you know -- narcotics being sent to the front line, you know, via anyone who said that the doctor up front needed them. You know, there were a lot of problems like that.

I spoke to a police -- I think he was an inspector, two-star inspector. I couldn't remember his name. I had issues with the Port Authority cops being up -- they were probably 30 yards into the rubble

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climbing around, and shortly after that was when there was a secondary collapse.

There was a Port Authority sergeant who came to our, you know, treatment area, and he requested some narcotics, the morphine, because either one or two of his officers were trapped, and he made statements to the effect that they were going to try and cut them out. He said he was a nurse.

With that, two doctors who were at my staging area naturally volunteered to go up on the rubble, so the paramedic decided -- I advised the paramedic to send them to give him the narcotics, and they did.

To my knowledge -- and I was there all night -- those officers never came to our staging area.

It was just mayhem. I don't know how else to explain it. For the most part, our people and the volunteers, you know, they really did a really good job, a little bit unorganized, in my opinion. Like I said, unfortunately, I spent too much time -- I think I had to spend way too much time baby-sitting the doctors and nurses, volunteers. They really had no idea, no conception of command, and to the command -- they were all great and willing to help and all that kind of

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stuff.

As a matter of fact, the fact that there were no patients or very few patients contributed to everyone being anxious and mulling around and all that type of stuff, and it just kind of complicated things a bit more.

What did get my attention, and the hair on my arm stands up as we talk about it, the people -- maybe not the higher-ranking, but the people who were down in the trenches -- cops, the firemen -- it was that they worked like they had worked together forever, like two good partners. They, you know -- for the most part, you know, listened to direction, you know, when it made sense, and anything you needed, people were right there, you know, hand in hand.

The volunteers, the public were outstanding. Even that early on, there were people walking around, you know, giving out cold drinks, you know, all of that kind of stuff. It was -- it was what kept me going the whole time.

I wound up being there from Tuesday morning until Friday, approximately 60 out of the 72 hours. I went home because [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Back to that Tuesday night again, there was a secondary collapse, which I'm not sure, but in my opinion, and what I think happened, that's what wound up taking a couple of those Port Authority cops that were missing.

Along with that, just in the mayhem to get away, we wound up treating three or four patients, just who got trampled, you know. You know, we had some problem with some organization. It's kind of difficult.

First of all, just two lieutenants. Phil Soto spent most of his time up at the edge of the pile with a couple of crews. Again, we face to faced a couple of times. We tried to keep the personnel at the pile as minimal as we could.

First of all, there were plenty of people. Second of all, nobody knew and it turned out hindsight is great, but there wound up being a secondary collapse a little bit later on the other side, which -- let me just kind of get a reference --

Q. The west side?

A. I was at Trinity and Liberty.

Q. Right.

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A. Somewhere over here.

Q. North, up near --

A. Somewhere in this area.

Q. Right, it would be towards --

A. Is that the northeast plaza building.

Q. Yes, near West and Vesey.

A. There was some kind of other -- another secondary collapse or something, because you heard the big crash, and everybody by that time now they are already -- everyone's on eggshells. Anytime you heard any kind of a -- whether it was a crane on the other side or anything that sounded like -- people were squirming and running.

I wound up getting out of there Wednesday morning, like I said, somewhere around seven o'clock, six, seven. The time frame was fuzzy. I came home. I came back to the battalion. I wound up being treated at St. Joseph's ER, because my eyes were so severely irritated. I had bilateral abrasions.

I went home for -- seemed like forever, but it turns out there was, like, a five-hour span between when I drove to Commack and got back here. I was back here by about 12 o'clock.

As a matter of fact, Lisa and Chris were



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waiting for me and wanted to know what took me so long, and we headed right back in again. When I got there, Captain Boyle was there. I can't think of one of the doctors. There was a doctor from the Fire Department. He was involved with FEMA. Kind of a big guy, oriental or Hawaiian type. I don't remember his name.

At that point, there was a triage treatment at Church and West at the Stuyvesant School.

Q. Right.

A. And at that point -- this is midday on Wednesday. It was still out of control. Narcotics and supplies were being sent up to the front line with civilians with a piece of masking tape on their shirt saying "EMT," and sending, again, supplies and even narcotics until -- I think it was Dr. Gonzalez was there. He told me kind of get a grip on the situation at Stuyvesant School, see what's going on. I did.

We set up security. We set up -- they pretty much had a treatment area set up. There was, you know, doctors, nurses. What wound up happening, with the help of Dr. Gonzalez, we put a stop to all the supplies going up to the front, first of all, without anyone we knew. We tried to get a grip on that.

We set up security in the Stuyvesant

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building, because there was a couple of problems with reporters and cameras and all that kind of stuff. It got to the point where I had to get -- I don't know whether they were National Guard or whoever they were -- they were military -- to set up at all the entrances.

We broke the teams, the doctors and nurses, into two, sent some of them upstairs to rest. There was a Dr. Rich Machette and a Nurse Jo. I don't even know -- who basically took control, and we brought -- one was as a leader for the day, one was the leader for the night.

They pretty much took control of the medical staff and with me. We pretty much got a grip on it. I had a half a dozen masseuses show up, who were willing to -- and they set up shop, and they were giving out massages to, you know, anyone, just send them over.

You know, guys had been there now for over 24 hours, and they were great, and a medical staff -- there was probably two teams of maybe 20 to 30 doctors and nurses, and some -- you know, we mixed them with our people.

Basically we had about six or eight, you know, stretchers set up, you know, for serious critical

patients, and there was a doctor and at least one nurse and one EMT at each stretcher. We had an eye wash area, and they really set up. I just kind of, you know, got it flowing a little better, but this guy Rich Machette, this doctor, and this Nurse Jo really were outstanding, and that's when supplies started showing up from everywhere.

I had a guy on a tractor trailer with 21 pallets. Said, you know, he was told to come down here. I didn't have the need here. I sent him back up to Chelsea Pier. I took a little bit of -- it was gowns, and gloves and that kind of stuff.

My main problem with the whole thing was the civilian medical people. I mean, doctors really had no idea. I had an anesthesiologist show up with a black bag full of drugs. I mean, like, you know, and he was going to anesthetize someone before he tubed them. He had no concept of the fact that our paramedics tube people all the time, and he really had -- I mean, he meant well.

I wound up asking him to leave because he became such a nuisance, you know. We kind of set up with Rich and Joe, so that I wouldn't be bothered with every little nonsense, and the guy just got to be such

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a pain in the ass that I had to ask him to leave that we didn't need him.

Similar with physical therapists. Everybody wanted to be in on all the conversations and all that, and I spent a lot of my time, you know, blocking and screening people who you really don't have time to explain. These doctors and such are so used to being in charge, and they had really no concept of the magnitude, or incident command at all.

I think that should be something that someone should, in a general, or whatever or something to that effect, because I spent a lot of my time schmoozing doctors and trying to get them out of my way.

Q. Right.

A. I was there Wednesday until Thursday morning, eight o'clock or so Thursday morning. The whole time my radio was pretty much useless. I used my cell phone for most of the communications, and I lost that for awhile in between there.

I had received a couple of calls during the course of the night because of my nine year old had a nightmare that I had been killed, and around then was when the news of Carlos Lillo started spreading around that he was missing. I broke him in when he started.

He was a partner of mine.

Anyway, by Thursday morning, I had to go home and take care of my son. He refused to go to school until he saw me, so I went home, and I took him to school, and I spoke to the counselors at the school, tried to get a couple of hours sleep.

I came back. It was late Thursday, about four o'clock, somewhere around then. I was there Thursday, and I was basically with Captain Boyle helping him with logistics, and he was just exhausted so he went -- I don't know whether the ship was there yet or he went uptown to one of the hotels that were letting people sleep or whatever, and I kind of -- I was there with Chief Perrugia and Lieutenant Mann.

At that time somewhere during the course of the night Thursday, I met a Chief Smith. There was a frantic rush because he had misplaced a piece of equipment on one of our gators, and he was frantic over it. You know, no one would elaborate over the radio what it was or whatever, and when I finally tracked it down, it turned out to be a Scott pack with a piece of the skull still attached to it, and wound up being Captain Amato's, from Squad 1, Scott pack.

It was amazing to me. The chief was, like,

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frantic and upset and on the verge of tears and all that. When I finally -- I didn't know what it was, and when I -- he opened it up. I brought it to him. He opened it up. He looked at it, and he handed it back to me and told me what it was.

By the time I, like, checked it out, and I was looking up to see how the chief was, because he was obviously upset and it was Chief Smith. He handed it over, and he did his job, and he was going back to work, and, you know, I had told him because when I brought him to the morgue, the morgue was, you know, barely set up (inaudible) and the marshals that were there, we kind of -- I kind of peeked over their shoulder while they were trying to figure out whose it was, the Squad 1 Position 1, which is the captain from Squad 1, and when I went back to at least give the chief some information, he was already gone back to work, you know, which was pretty moving.

By that time it started raining during the course of the night between Thursday and Friday. To be honest, I was pretty disappointed in how the movement of our personnel went out, was seriously lacking, you know. We had an academy staff that was there for, like, 20 hours, waiting, like, four hours for a ride

DOMINICK MAGGIORE

home, a ride out of there, and we couldn't effect it.

In my opinion, a lot of the -- you know, I'm in charge, I'm in charge, started taking place, and at that point, I had to pull myself, because it was difficult for me to begin with. Naturally, my family was not happy that I was there, although they understood as best they could that's where I had to be, but when, you know, that ugly stuff started showing its face, I knew it was time for me to back out of there, and I wound up leaving there. When I finally got a bus to take the academy staff out, it was when I left, and I pulled out.

Took a couple of days off, and I went back, and then I've been back there two weeks ago, and I went back a couple of days to work the morgue sector. I worked EMAP sector, and then the next week I was there for three more days, and now three or four weeks into it, and we still were not organized enough to get our people in and out of there in a reasonable fashion. Every day wound up being 16 hours, 17 hours.

Q. Of a 12-hour tour?

A. Right. Well, it was a regular tour for me. I went there on straight time.

Q. Right.

DOMINICK MAGGIORE

A. So it wound up being 16 hours, 15 hours.

Q. Right.

A. It's just the people -- this is my own -- the public -- had it not been for the public, I couldn't have done it. You know, as much as there were these incidents of the isolated assholes who acted stupid and this kind of stuff, you know, that happens all the time unfortunately. It brings out the shit in people as much as it brings out the good in people.

When I went back there Wednesday -- I was driving in -- West Street was lined, like, from the Chelsea Pier to, like, 59th Street where I came across town, or somewhere thereabouts, with the public. There were people walking around, you know, handing you sodas, handing you gloves, handing you cold drinks.

If it were not for the public and their support, I probably would not have been able to do it. When I came home that Wednesday morning, my pharmacist -- and I live in Commack, which is you know, 45 minutes from the city, you know, I explained to him, look, I need this prescription. It was for my eyes. If you can't do it right now, I have to leave, because -- he dropped what he was doing. He did it.

Thursday when I went home for a couple of



DOMINICK MAGGIORE

hours, I had seen my doctor because my feet were all screwed up. I broke a couple of toes. My feet were really bad. I wound up -- my doctor stopped in the middle of treating a patient, brought me in. He wound up giving me cortisone shots, because my feet were so screwed up. He wrote me scripts, called them in to the pharmacy, you know, and they are pretty far removed. They really didn't have to do all that, especially the doctor. He just like -- and that was -- that was far away.

Saturday and Sunday I stayed home, and although I would have liked to have just relaxed, there was a steady flow at my house of neighbors, friends -- neighbors that I'm really not, you know, close with and stuff that knew I had been down there that had seen some pictures, and it made a difference.

I think that's about my story.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right, Dom. I thank you for your story. The interview concludes. It's 7:09 a.m. Thanks again, Dom.

File No. 9110121

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ROLAND DIAZ

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

## R. DIAZ

TAMBASCO: Today is October 22<sup>nd</sup>. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview into the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> at the World Trade Center. Interview time is beginning at 8:08, and our interview today is with...

ROLAND DIAZ: Roland Diaz Junior.

Q: Roland, tell us your story.

A: I remember on September 11<sup>th</sup>, I was going to post when I got a call for a plane that hit the World Trade Center. Me and my partner started heading down there.

Q: Who was your partner that day?

A: Chris Attanasio. We started heading down there towards Manhattan. We were at the Bruckner Interchange when I saw the second plane hit the second tower. So, we're rushing down there, we're fighting traffic. We go on the FDR, we get off. We got there between 10-15 minutes. We started pulling up on Church Street.

Q: Do you remember Church and what?

A: Church and Vessey.

Q: Great,

A: That was the staging when we first got there. On our approach we saw bodies on the floor. We go talk to the commander. The commander tells us to start setting up, start heading in. As we started getting on our gear, the Lieutenant came out and told us that they're changing staging to West and Vessey. So we pull to West and Vessey. We get our stretcher out. We're getting our gear. We go down and start walking

## R. DIAZ

towards the building. There was so many people there, everybody was running around. It was more a thing of people running around like a chicken without a head. So before I started to go, I had this need to call my Dad. When I picked up the phone to call my Dad to tell him bye, I was in building....

Q: The North Building is One, the South Building is Two.

A: No, I was in building Five. I went into the entrance, they also had another triage set up in there. I pick up the pay phone, call my dad, I finally get in touch with my Dad. People start running, yelling another plane hit the building. So, one side of the building was all glass, when I looked at it, my first reaction was to run down into the basement. But then in my head I said, that would have been the wrong thing, I would have been stuck down there. So I start running towards West Street within the building, so I guess I'm running West. I found an exit. Once I stepped out the exit, a cloud of smoke with debris, the minute I stepped out, overtook me. It was so much debris that if you put your hand in front of your face, you couldn't see it. I started coughing. At the same time, I'm still trying to get to West Street, away from the tragedy. Me and my partner, we meet up. This gentleman from OEM, Operations Emergency Management...

Q: OEM.

A: Yeah, OEM for New York City comes up to me and my partner. He says my Lieutenant is still in there, I need somebody to take us. So me and my partner, adrenaline is still rushing, we go to the ambulance, which is full of debris. At that time

## R. DIAZ

everybody is running in all directions cause they didn't know what was going on. All they knew was somebody yelled that second plane hit the building, and later they realized that the building collapsed. So we run back to the bus. Luckily the bus starts. The guy from Emergency Management jumped in the bus, we started heading back towards tower one. We opened up the doors. We got as close as possible. A fireman came up to us, he had lacerations to his face, he had burns, he had respiratory problems. Another gentleman came up to us, he had a pacemaker and he had chest pains. A handicapped woman, on TV they mentioned, not everyone had seen it about this guy who said he was helping this lady down the stairs who was handicapped, brought her down into the lobby, didn't know what happened to her, and was wondering if she was alive. I happened to be, me and partner, the ambulance that picked her up. Everybody ran to us. We put on our masks cause we kept breathing in, breathing in. We transported at least 6 to 7 people. Cause everybody ran in, we closed the doors, and we took them to, I think it's Cabrini Hospital. The one thing that I really remember. When we pulled up it was a ghost town. All you saw was dust. The building wasn't there anymore. Everybody's running in different directions. Everybody's trying to find each other. After that, my partner and I talked and listened to other peoples' stories, and basically that's it.

Q: So you were already en route to the hospital when the second building came down then?

A: Yeah, I was there when the first building collapsed.

## R. DIAZ

Q: Well, is there anything else you'd like to add to this for posterity?

A: Well, September 11<sup>th</sup> will be a day that I'll never forget. You know, it made me a different person to realize how precious life is and it gave me different aspects of how I see things now. And to all the families that lost members, my deepest regrets to them.

Q: Okay, well I thank you for your interview. This interview concludes at 8:15 AM.

File No. 9110122

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER CONSTANTINE

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

## P. CONSTANTINE

MIKE TAMBASCO: Today is October 22<sup>nd</sup>, I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview into the events of the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup> at the World Trade Center. The time that the interview begins is 6:35 AM. The interview today is with EMT Peter Constantine of Battalion 20. Pete, just give me your name, ranks and assignment, then just tell me your story.

PETER CONSTANTINE: Peter Constantine, EMT, Battalion 20. I usually get off at 8 in the morning. That day we had a late call. After the late call, we came back to the battalion, when we saw that the Trade Center was hit by a plane. We were assigned to go down. As we started heading down the West Side Highway, we saw the second plane, we saw both towers on fire. There was nobody on the West Side Highway after the second plane, just us and the police following each other down. We went straight through all the way down. We parked the ambulance with a lot of other ambulances on Vessey Street and West. We basically started grabbing equipment and helping out people who were running out from the building originally. At that time it was just chaos, everybody going everywhere. We were helping any way we could. A lot of people wanted to help. At that time, I don't know what time it was, we heard across the radio the tower's gonna fall, the tower's gonna fall.

Q: You heard that on the radio?



## P. CONSTANTINE

A: Oh yeah, it came across. And then all of a sudden, when you looked up, you froze for a couple of seconds, you saw these little pieces falling off. Then all of a sudden, everyone started to run. Then, you started to run, your helping people, helping them run. You saw it, it was amazing...like out of a movie, you know, the cloud's just chasing you. As you look back, you see it engulf people. After that was over, we all went back in.

Q: Do you know about how far up you got before you went back?

A: It had to have been a couple blocks. We also brought the ambulance too.

Q: Oh, you took the ambulance with you?

A: When we went back, and then we just started helping people. Everyone was covered in dust, everyone was breathing it in, we were trying to help them, cleaning them off, anybody injured. Basically at that point it was just a whole mess of people: a lot of EMS, a lot of Fire, a lot of Police, just everybody helping everybody, trying to do whatever you could, as much as you could in a fast amount of time. Mostly we were cleaning off the dust from your eyes and face. A couple of people needed to be transported, so we designated the busses to transport. Basically it was everybody trying to work together, get it together, cause it was chaotic too. And then, it felt like ten minutes, the other building fell. I read in the paper the next day that it was actually something like 30 minutes later that it fell. When that one fell everybody ran again.

Q: You must have been right next to it then when that one came down, right? Cause that was the North Tower that came down second.

## P. CONSTANTINE

A: We were close, but when we ran, we ran enough fast enough, that we weren't as overcome as other people. We got out. But we still got covered. Then when the other tower had fallen, it felt like ten minutes, but it was like you said, a half an hour. Everybody ran again, then there was a gas leak they said, they pushed everybody way back to 23<sup>rd</sup>. So you had all these units, all these rescue people stationed at 23<sup>rd</sup> street, and you couldn't do anything. That was the most frustrating part, cause you were there, and you were helping everybody but you couldn't go back to go get them. So you had to just sit there, cause those were our orders. We had to just sit there. Which was smart cause it was such an unsafe scene. That was basically it, we sat there for a couple of hours, everybody, not knowing what to do or how to help. Then eventually we started getting different assignments. Then they sent us home, we spent the night at ---they set up quarters at the hospital, cause you couldn't go home. There were cars everywhere and they blocked you in. So me and my partner actually slept at the hospital in the dialysis unit that night. Then we came back, went back down, did a couple tours down there. It felt like we were actually doing something, helping when we went back down. It changed my life you know? I've only been on the job six months, and I saw something like that.

Q: You won't see something like that again.

A: I hope not. That's pretty much what happened that day.

## P. CONSTANTINE

Q: Anything else you want to add to it? Go down into the history?  
Anything?

A: It changed my life. I'm like, ready to get married and have kids. I don't know what's gonna happen. I'm too young though, I'm 23.

Q: Okay Pete, thanks for the interview. We'll conclude the interview at 6:41.

A: Thank you.

File No. 9110123

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT VINCENT MARQUEZ

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 22, 2001. I am Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York, conducting an interview with --

EMT MARQUEZ: Vincent Marquez, EMT, Battalion 20.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001. The time now is 0855, beginning of the interview.

Q. If you would start pretty much from when you were assigned to the job and how you got into lower Manhattan.

A. Okay. Basically what I remember is that day I -- that morning I was off. I was at home. I was on the computer, and I had the TV on. I heard the TV say that there was an explosion at one of the towers. I thought it was internal. I really didn't pay much mind to it until the second plane hit and I heard the news reporter say, "Oh, my God." I know what's going on now.

At which time I stared at the TV and

they showed the instant replay. When I saw the second plane hit, I immediately called the station. They asked me to come in. I came down, put on my uniform, and I grabbed Fermin. We jumped on a bus, and we were 20 Nora.

I remember en route there was like a lot of confusion on the radio, and I heard somebody screaming "Mayday!" The dispatcher apparently didn't hear them. As soon as there was a break on the radio, I got on the radio and said, "20 Nora, somebody is calling a mayday." The dispatcher said, "Who is calling a mayday?" The guy kept saying, "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!" All of a sudden it was just dead silence, at which time me and Fermin, we looked at each other. We were like, oh, my God.

Anyway, when we got there, there was a lot of dust and debris just floating around. It was pretty hard to see maybe three, four feet in front of you. I jumped out of the ambulance, and I grabbed my bag and just started walking towards where I thought the smoke was coming from.

I distinctly remember hearing somebody like whimpering, and I started make may way

towards that sound. I couldn't see, but I was following it from what I was hearing. All of a sudden there was like this roar. I remember stopping.

It's funny because yesterday I was thinking about this and I remember Fermin screaming out my name and telling me to run. That's when I kind of like woke up. I turned around and just started running. As I started running, I looked behind me and there was this huge, black cloud just closing in on us.

Once it pretty much settled, I went back with Fermin to where I thought I heard this whimpering coming from, and there was nothing but silence, this eerie silence.

Fermin had the stretcher, and he was following me. I was pretty much just leading the way. We picked up people here and there, and we just started throwing people in the back of the ambulance. We dropped them off at Metropolitan Hospital and shot back.

We went back into the area, pretty much ground zero. It seemed like a nuclear bomb had hit. There were vehicles abandoned at the light.

There were vehicles crashed into each other, vehicles on top of each other. I remember seeing firemen walking around in a daze.

I think the second time around Fermin -- we got separated, and I met up with two guys from Battalion 17. I don't remember their names. They were out there doing the green ham thing. They had the EMS jackets with Green's name on it and stuff like that. They just grabbed whatever equipment they could and they just went out trying to find people.

I remember looking into -- because all the cars, everything was covered with dust and debris. We were lifting things and walking by the cars and wiping the window to see if there was anybody in the cars, stuff like that.

I think that what hurts the most is the fact that there was nobody to save. I don't know. I guess that's pretty much it, just trying to find somebody to save, but there was no one.

Q. When you were going down, responding down there, do you remember what routes you took, what streets you were on once you got down there?

A. I remember we went up Fifth Avenue,



because I remember seeing Central Park to my right. Once the park ended -- Fermin was driving, and he just started making twisting lefts and rights and stuff like that. So I really don't remember. I really don't remember where it was that he parked.

I know that there was a couple of ambulances already there when we got there. But it's like the ambulances were a couple of blocks ahead, and everybody was where we were at. I found that -- I don't know, to myself I said why are they here. That's when I grabbed my gear and I just walked by everybody and just started walking towards the cloud.

Q. Do you know was that still north of the Trade Center complex?

A. I don't remember that. I don't remember that.

Q. Aside from your partner, did you recognize anybody else that was down there?

A. Kevin Darnowski. He's one of the paramedics here. I remember seeing him down there. I don't remember his name, but when I first got on the job we had -- I had a partner.

I used to work in Manhattan. I remember seeing him. I don't remember his name.

I know that after all this -- after we finished looking and stuff like that, we went to the pier that was one of the triage areas. When I got there, that's when I --

Q. Chelsea Pier?

A. Yeah, that's the pier that takes you to the ferry.

When I got there, that's when I saw a lot of people from the station that I knew. They were there setting up triage and stuff like that.

Yeah, that's it. That's all I remember.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you'd like to add?

A. Yeah. I remember later that night I had gone to -- no, actually it was the second day, Wednesday. We had gone to actually where ground zero was at. I don't remember what it was that I needed, but whatever it was, it was at a makeshift morgue that they had.

I remember just seeing big body bags with little lumps in them. At that point I

realized that those were body parts in there, not entire bodies. I remember when I looked to my left someone was putting a leg or a foot in a bag, and they were just starting to zipper it. I just felt helpless.

I went down the 11th and the 12th. After that I didn't go back down anymore. When I realized that there was -- I think it was pretty much the second day, because myself, like everybody, was hoping that we could pull people out, there would be actually someone. But the second night I realized that there was no one to save, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

That's pretty much it. After that it was lack of sleep, the nightmares, which I'm still having.

That's pretty much it. That's what I can remember.

MR. RADENBERG: Just for correction, on the start time of the interview was at 0850, and the time is now 0902 with the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110124

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF JAMES MARTIN

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. MARTIN

MR. TAMBASCO: The date is October 22, 2002. I'm Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We're in the office of chief J. P. Martin at Battalion 20 in the Bronx. The time is 0655 hours and we're conducting an interview into the events that chief Martin witnessed on September 11th at the World Trade Center.

Q. Chief, if you'd be so good to tell us your story.

A. On the morning of September 11th, I was at home. I was notified by my aide that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. Having responded in 1993 to the initial World Trade Center bombing, I was pretty convinced that we'd be responding in.

I notified Citywide on the radio that I was available for response and awaited their dispatch not knowing what resources had been assigned already. About ten minutes after that I was advised to respond in. I called my aide back, advised him that we were rolling, that I would meet him at our Battalion, 53, and we would go in together from there. I got dressed, got in the response vehicle and responded in from home. I live in New Rochelle.

We encountered terrific traffic delays on the

J. MARTIN

way in. We found a lot of civilian vehicles were stopped in the middle of the highway at high points on the roadway where you could see Manhattan to watch the towers burn. So we had difficulty getting in. But on the way in I tried to develop a response plan for EMS.

I notified the Citywide dispatcher that, instead of responding directly to the site, that I would respond to the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge and establish a casualty collection point, and I directed them to have all Brooklyn and Queens units respond to that location in lieu of responding directly into Manhattan and we would from that point funnel patients out from there utilizing the Manhattan ambulances to ferry patients across the bridge and go right out from there. Another chief, Ellen Scibelli, heard my request. She was only a few minutes out from there. She said she would respond to that location and she did so and started to establish this casualty collection point.

Upon our arrival at that location, which was the intersection of Tillary and Adams Street, Ellen had already established the site. She had a number of ambulances there. She was also working with Lieutenant Joe Lugo. We noticed just hordes of people coming over

J. MARTIN

the Brooklyn Bridge covered in soot. I took a hydrant wrench from out of the trunk of the car and I opened up a couple of hydrants or I had a couple of hydrants opened so that people could decontaminate themselves at that location, and I got on the radio to try and establish radio contact with any other chief officers, EMS chief officers who were operating on the Manhattan side.

There was no response at that point. No one came over the radio, there was no voice conversation, and you couldn't see from all the smoke, but that was the point, I believe, that the second tower had dropped at that point. Like I say, no one was answering the radio.

I notified the Citywide dispatcher that I would assume command of the EMS operation until such time as they were able to contact any other chief officer, and I asked Citywide to do a roll call of EMS officers to determine who was operational and who was not. At that point I wasn't sure if people were alive or dead, and it was a very terrifying moment thinking that I had the responsibility for the EMS response to this incident.

I also was very concerned about going over

J. MARTIN

the bridge knowing, of course, that two airplanes had struck, that it was an obvious terrorist incident at this point, was there anything else involved besides just aircraft, were there chemicals or biological or nuclear components to this that would have affected anyone operating on the other side, and I felt that it might be more prudent to run the operation from the Brooklyn side and just await confirmation that there were people operating on the Manhattan side. I didn't feel it was prudent to send further resources over the bridge if there was an inferno or if there was a higher risk going on on the Manhattan side.

Several minutes later Chief John Peruggia came up on the radio. He said he was operational. I said do you want me to respond in to your location? He said yes and he gave me the intersection of Chambers Street and West to respond in to.

I did so. I traveled directly across Chambers Street after crossing the Brooklyn Bridge and the roadway was littered with a couple of inches of white dust. It almost looked like you were traveling through a snowstorm. There was a very strong odor of smoke in the air. There were some people walking around with paper masks.



J. MARTIN

We found a group of ambulances at Church Street and Chambers Street and an EMS lieutenant from the South Bronx. I'll try and think of his name later. I asked him to try and organize those ambulances and write down who they were and we would contact him on the radio if we needed those resources. I continued driving westward across Chambers Street to West Street, where I met up with Chief Peruggia and Chief Kowalczyk, and from that point we began to regroup all of the EMS resources at that location.

Within a short time, Chief McCracken appeared, Commissioner John Claire appeared, and we began developing a response plan for how we would manage the injured and we tried to regroup the officers who were there. Chief Basile came up. All of the officers who were there prior to my arrival were visibly shaken. They were really -- they were coping, but you could see that they were really visibly shaken by the incident. Kevin Howe, he's a lieutenant down at Lincoln, he was operating as safety officer. I believe he had responded in from home, and he was trying to ensure that people who were operating were operating in a safe environment and he was doing a real good job of that.

J. MARTIN

I stayed at the command post. Walter gave me the responsibility, Chief Kowalczyk gave me the responsibility of the communications officer, and one of the things that I had done prior to leaving the house, having responded the first time and realizing that we had limited resources, I filled the car up with several bottles of water and I brought my little portable radio charger. Knowing that the new 3500 radios were out there but we didn't have chargers for them, I threw that in. So I felt that, if we could find 110 volts, we could at least keep the radios charged for the extent of the event. So I had that with us and we found a source and we kept just exchanging batteries through the course of the day.

Between Chief Kowalczyk and I, we reestablished contact with all of the chief officers. He had all of the chief officers report in, regroup, briefed everyone on the operational plan, and he handled the planning component and I handled essentially the communications and the, I guess, the smaller scale directions for officers on scene and left the more major decisions to Chief Kowalczyk and Chief McCracken.

I recall seeing Chief Gombo at the scene as

J. MARTIN

well. I did speak to Chief Villani on the radio. He was down at the South Ferry. Chief Friedman I spoke to on the radio. He was handling the Staten Island side. He was prepared down there to transfer numbers of patients from the ferry terminal in St. George to Staten Island hospitals.

Chief Carrasquillo was also at the command post we had established at Chambers and West, and I had encouraged him to try and -- I gave him the number of my wife, who is a paramedic in New Jersey, and I gave him a number for their dispatch center to try and establish a casualty collection point on the Jersey side because I knew there were ferries going back and forth and we could coordinate with Jersey on distributing patients to Jersey hospitals. I don't know if that was ever accomplished or not. But I also know that we didn't see large numbers of patients. I think by the end of the day, we had only seen 100 or so patients, so all of the plans really were kind of unnecessary. People either walked away from it or they didn't, and those who did walk away sought out medical attention on their own.

Can we pause this for a minute?

Q. Sure.

J. MARTIN

(Pause)

A. The lieutenant I was trying to think of who was standing by at the intersection of Church Street and Chambers Street was Eddie Platt. He's normally assigned to Battalion 17. I had him collect the resources at that location.

Later on in the day, Deputy Chief Larry Mittleman arrived at the command post. I shouldn't say later on. It was probably a half hour to an hour after I had established contact with Chief Peruggia and Chief Kowalczyk. I asked Chief Mittleman to go over to Church Street and Chambers Street and make contact with Lieutenant Platt and determine what resources were at that location for deployment into the incident.

I don't really recall much other detail about the response component. I remained on the scene and operated as the communications officer until about 2:00 o'clock in the morning, when Chief Kowalczyk relieved me and asked me to come in the following day.

I recall looking at the dust that had come down and spread itself out over the area, looking at the fibrous component and thinking it was probably all asbestos. We somehow acquired paper masks and we were utilizing those for the duration of the day, and the

J. MARTIN

following day we had better masks to put on.

I don't know. I can't think of too much else at this point. A lot of the day is a big blur.

Q. Chief, anything else you'd like to add emotionwise, anything that you'd like to have recorded?

A. Emotionally, it was probably the most terrifying day of my life, not knowing if we were going into an incident that we may not come back out of. I recall hearing loud noises during the course of the day and not knowing if it was -- knowing that they had stopped all commercial aviation and not knowing if this was another aircraft that had gotten through that was heading towards us, if it was friendly aircraft or if it was a building collapsing, and there was constant tension the whole day, on top of that the constant decision making, one after the other, the radio was going the whole time, people were asking for direction and we were giving out direction.

Having responded, like I say, the first time, I was familiar with geography, so that I found was a tremendous aid, but it was very disorienting with the amount of debris in the roadway. You couldn't get through West Street, you couldn't get through Liberty Street, you couldn't get through Vesey Street, you

J. MARTIN

couldn't get through Church Street. All the surrounding roadways had collapsed so that our access was very much impeded.

The biggest problem was going north and south. You couldn't really go -- a lot of our resources were down South Ferry. We couldn't bring them north. Anything that would happen in the north we couldn't bring south. So we had to utilize some gators that we had brought in. There were some people who drove gators in from -- Tony DeGennaro, he's a paramedic out of Battalion 49, drove a gator from Elmhurst in. I don't know how he got there as quickly as he did.

But the gators were a godsend. They were about the only thing that was able to move through there. I think we had the first gators on the scene and they remained the only vehicles that could get around the site at all.

There were large numbers of volunteers that came to the scene and we tried to utilize them as best we could and keep our units available for the regular 911 response, and we had a large number of them staged just up the block.

I saw Chief Hart during the course of the day

J. MARTIN

along with his aide. Actually, I saw him with Grace Cacciola, who is a lieutenant in the EMS Division 1. Chief Hart had had two near-death experiences. I think pretty much everyone who was there from the beginning had not just one but two near-death experiences and these people were visibly shaken.

Chief Wells I saw later on during the course of the day. Chief Browne I did not see. I was told he was injured. There were reports that several people had been killed, several of the EMS officers, none of which, of course, turned out to be true, and all of this weighed heavily on us, but I think we still were able to make decisions, make prudent decisions, and make sure that all of our people were operating in as safe an environment as we could.

I think certainly Chief Kowalczyk, who organized the operational component of it, I thought operated extremely well in spite of what he's gone through this year. He really deserves a tremendous amount of credit for the effort that he put in.

I would say that's it.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right, Chief. I thank you so much for your interview. Thank you.

THE WITNESS: My pleasure.

J. MARTIN

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview concludes at  
0717 hours.



File No. 9110125

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMTD FERMIN MERRERO

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 22nd. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force, conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. The interview start time is 0826 hours, and our interview today is with --

EMTD MARRERO: Fermin Marrero.

MR. TAMBASCO: And your rank and assignment?

EMTD MARRERO: I'm EMTD, I suppose it is.

Q. If you would, tell us your story.

A. Well, it was September 11th. I was at my girlfriend's house waiting for her to come back from taking my stepdaughter to school. I usually wake up at 5:30 in the morning to watch the news, but I had a three-day swing, so I just slept a little late.

So when I wake up, the first thing I do is turn on the news. All of a sudden I was just stupefied. I started thinking about it. When it first happened, I said it could be some type of accident. I remember in 1946 a plane hit the

Empire State Building.

Today you have ground control, you have satellites. But when the second plane hit, you know what's going on. Even though it was my day off, I jumped up. My girlfriend asked me where I was going. I said, "Honey, I've got to go."

I reported here. It was a madhouse, people running up and down, people grabbing equipment, grabbing vehicles. Somebody said, "We don't know what we're supposed to do." I said, "I know what we're going to do. They're going to send me down there. As soon as somebody comes, one of my boys, Vinnie Marquez came in. Me and him went out. I went home and -- I left my bulletproof vest there. I picked it up, and we were gone.

I want to tell you that when you go up on the Brooklyn Boulevard, you could see the World Trade Center burning. You could see both buildings. That's when we started praying. This has started to help me be strong and proper. Everything I did that day -- I know Vinnie is a good guy. He was in the military.

When we got there, they told us to

report to Fulton and Broadway. We parked our vehicle. We ran into Lieutenant -- her name is Karen. She's an instructor. She's a paramedic now. Tolingo.

Q. Tolingo, Janet, maybe?

A. Janet.

Q. Janet Olszewski?

A. That's it, Janet. That's her. She's a good person, a good instructor. She said just get oxygen out and water. So I said okay.

A lot of people were coming by, asking us for those masks, and we didn't have any. So we took sheets and we tore them into pieces and gave them to them. I started taking out the oxygen. Vinnie said, "I'm going down the block to see if anybody needs help and I'll bring them here." I said, "Okay. You do that."

Like ten minutes into that, right there at Fulton and Broadway, I hear this rumbling. Everybody is looking up in the sky. I said, oh, man. Really I didn't know the first tower is already down. Then everybody starts running. I said, no, this can't be. Everybody is looking to see where it's coming from. We started running.

Then I said I need to find my partner. That's when the smoke came zooming. It's indescribable. It's like as you see on TV when they're in an avalanche. It just came zooming out. It's like when you have pressure and everyone is running.

I said, oh, my God, my partner. I started running toward him. There was a point there that there was no visibility. It was black. It was hard to believe. It's like 9-something in the morning, 9:30 in the morning, and the sun hasn't gotten directly above, but (inaudible).

So I'm running toward my ambulance, and he comes. I grab him. I said, "Get in the ambulance, and let's move further up." I turned on my lights, my sirens, my high beams. I move a foot when this other ambulance comes out of nowhere. It says something Valley Hudson, a volunteer. I would have hit him or he would have hit me, really.

Then a guy said the second tower is down. I didn't know the first tower is down. It's impossible. It's impossible. I really said

that. I said, "This can't be. Here in New York, we (inaudible)." I said, "Let's bring the bus down as far as we can, bring out the stretcher and see what we're going to do."

So we brought down the stretcher, put all the oxygen on it. We did a favor we shouldn't have, (inaudible) the Port Authority. You know what I mean?

We started going down the block, and we ran into an old man and this guy that had a laceration on his arm. Vinnie took care of that. I took care of the old man. We didn't hardly do anything. So I find the police (inaudible). Yeah, here's two guys over here with some badges. I said take them, put them in the back. We didn't know we were going to be staying for a long time. I didn't have coffee that morning.

Then we come out with the stretcher, and these people were carrying this fireman.

Q. Do you know about where you were then?

A. Yeah. We were right here. Here's Fulton and Cedar, Broadway. Me and Vinnie came down to here.

Q. So you went south on Broadway?

A. Yeah, we went south on Broadway, almost to Wall Street. This is the bank here, I think. It was in this area here.

Q. Right around near 140 Broadway?

A. Right. We went all the way back up. Then we came down. We stopped over here in this area here.

Q. Right near City Hall?

A. Right, we were around City Hall, because they told us there was a fireman hurt there -- a policeman hurt. So this is where we went. I took care of him.

Then we came back through here. Right here is a bank. In the bank we found this lady who was hysterical. She was really breathing. She was upset. She was breathing. I said, "Vinnie, we've got to leave her."

So we came back down. At this point I went and got the ambulance and brought it down to here, right up to here.

Q. Back to like Broadway and Fulton?

A. Right. Then we found this fireman -- no, I think that's where we ran into some of our boys, Charlie from station 50. I forget his last

name. He was right there on Kings Bridge and Reservoir. And a medic. So we took him with us.

So then we decided that we were going to have to go back to the ferry. We went to the ferry. That's where we ran into Juan Burgo, Mike Negron, Charlie and the medic. I said, "Look, we're going back out. We ain't staying here."

So we come back down over there, and we're on Trinity --

Q. You came north on Trinity?

A. We came back north on Trinity. Right around here they stopped us, and they had this old man with a pacemaker having chest pains.

Let me tell you something, it was nothing about ego. Nobody was in charge. I know what they teach you at the academy about we're going to triage, we're going to do this, we're going to do that. One thing about it, everybody kept their head. Everybody worked as a team.

I said, Charlie, why don't you take O2 and stay with the old man. We're going to go straight up Trinity. Whatever we find, we'll come back down and pick you up with the old man and take him to the ferry. He said that's cool.



So he jumped out. When we got right around here, we found this fireman.

Q. That's around Cedar Street?

A. Yeah, right around Cedar, right here. Right here, in fact.

Q. Trinity and Cedar?

A. Trinity and Cedar. We find this fireman. He's like in shock. I'm 48, and I think I look pretty good. He said he was 48, but he looked like he was sixty that day. I'm telling you, he was walking around aimlessly. I said, "Come here, come here, come here. What's wrong?" He said, "Nothing. Get off of me." I said, "Are you okay?" He said, "I'm okay, just having a little chest pain." "Come with us. We'll take your blood pressure and give you some oxygen. That'll make you feel better."

So we walked him back up to the ambulance, and we put him in the ambulance and we went straight back down to right over here as far as we can go. We asked if anybody needed help. I said all we've got is our patient here. We're going to treat him. We went back to Cedar. We got up to here.

Q. To about Cortlandt Street?

A. Cortlandt Street, yeah.

Then that's it. Then we stood there and we looked at it. The metal part sticking up looked like a crown. I was going to walk in there, but Vinnie said don't go in there, it looks like it's gonna fall. I said, "Let's get the fireman and the old man out of here."

So we came back, picked up Charlie and the old man, and we came up to like -- by the exchange. I came across --

Q. And then went down Broadway?

A. No, no, we came across the exchange, and over here we ran into a lieutenant. "You can take them to Metropolitan." There was so much madness that we went up Broadway, kept on going. We kept on going up Broadway past all this madness.

Then we got across to Canal Street, we found this African-American lady on the ground. I think she was (inaudible). They stopped us. I said let's go on in there.

It was really funny, the fireman said, "I want to smoke a cigarette." I said, "Pop,

with all this shit, you want to smoke?" He said, "Listen, son." "But you have chest pain." "That building fell five feet away from me." I said, "You ain't going to die today, boy. You better smoke two of them."

So we took him in the ambulance, and then we had the lady. I stopped again. Then they brought this oriental gentleman. So help me God, he was covered, he was white; from head to toe, white he had a gash on his forehead. We threw him in there, gave triage to everybody.

We let the other guys off, let them could go back and help. We zoomed all the way to Metropolitan. The eeriest feeling in the world is to be on that highway and there be nobody else there but you.

We got to Metropolitan. We dropped everybody off. I took a broom. I swept the whole ambulance real quick of debris. We went up to Harlem to get another stretcher, but that was a bad move. So we had to come back all the way around the way we did, and go all the way back down around.

Then we went back to Liberty and Cedar,

and that's where we picked up Juan again and Charlie, the other medic, and Mike Negron. We went back up there hunting, so to speak, and we found four more people and we took them to the hospital.

Then by that time the sun was like overhead, like 12:00. You don't have any sense of time. My dogs are killing me. My dogs are killing me for two weeks. I have some things for my feet now. Really, I'm telling you, they're killing me for two weeks. I have to write a letter about that.

In all that madness, everybody kept their head. When we got there, when the sun was really out, then we saw -- let me tell you something, you can't beat a New Yorker in a pinch. I don't care what you say about this city. You can't beat a New Yorker in a pinch.

The guy from McDonald's -- McDonald's opened. He was giving out cheese sandwiches; he was giving out coffee. By this time -- we were out at 9:30. I woke up at -- the first building had been struck, and I was there to see the second building get hit from my house. I was all

the way down there at 9:30.

The thing is, there were people out there giving us food, giving us water. You don't think about it, but by that time I was like -- by 2:00 I was already beat.

We ran into this lieutenant. I forget his name. He had a whole bunch of people. So we went back to the World Trade Center -- I mean to --

Q. The ferry terminal?

A. -- the ferry terminal, told the lieutenant. We came back, but we couldn't find him. So we assumed somebody else picked him up and took him to where he had to go.

After that it was just like cut and dry. I can't say it was humdrum, because there was nothing humdrum about this. I got enough and I was working with a lot of good guys, Vinnie Marquez, Juan Burgo, Mike Negron. Charlie, I'm going to forget his last name, the medic, from Station 50.

Chief Basile was there. There was a point I said, "Chief, we can't stay because there's a lieutenant stuck up there and we know

where we're going." He just said, "Go, go." He didn't hold us back.

All that soot and stuff I breathed in. It's been bothering me ever since then. They told me I could go down there. They have medicine for you down there. I don't know.

It was also everybody. Even just a month later, I had to go away for like nine days to get myself together. I had a knee operation, so I just took nine days of R&R.

Other than that, you know, it was a horrible experience, but like I said, you can't beat a New Yorker in a pinch. I pray to God it never happens again, that we have to go through this again.

That's it.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. Outside of my dogs, my feet. Oh, and I lost an ambulance, but I brought back the de-fib. I want that for the record. Thank you so much.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview concludes at 0840 hours.

File No. 9110126

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSEPH HENDERSON

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 22nd, 2001. I am Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0814 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT HENDERSON: Henderson, Joseph, EMT, at Battalion 20.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20. This interview is regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. You can pretty much start with when you were assigned to the job.

A. I was assigned to the job approximately 8:30. We took the Bruckner to the -- I forget the name of it, the other highway to get into Manhattan.

Q. On the east side, the FDR?

A. Yeah, FDR, but the toll you pay before you reach the FDR. Anyway, FDR. There was heavy traffic, a lot of police cars, a lot of FBI cars. Traffic was finally clearing all the way down. We parked right across the street from Two World Trade Center.



Q. On the West Side Highway?

A. Yeah, on the West Side Highway.

Q. Just south of Liberty?

A. Yeah.

There were body parts all over the place. When we were going there, you could see the buildings on fire. When we pulled up, a lot of people were screaming, people running in and out of the buildings.

We were directed where to park. We parked, and we went to help two other medics. Then when we were coming back, we went to go to the staging area when somebody started screaming that the building was falling.

I looked up, because I went back to the bus to get the long board while my partner was waiting for me. I looked up, see all the debris, you hear the rumble coming down. I don't know which direction I took off to go. I took off from like this way.

As I was running, you feel a bunch of debris hit you and knock you down. After I got up, you couldn't see where you were going. You had a bunch of people screaming. A few of the

ambulances were exploding. You felt debris hitting you, choking, couldn't breathe, walking around, it seemed like forever.

Finally I was able to get inside of an ambulance that the lights on. We stayed there for a few minutes. But there was so much debris and stuff that you could hear hit the buses and stuff, like stuff was crashing on the bus around you. So we were able to get out.

There was a building on the side that we were able to go into. We stayed there for, I don't know, a certain amount of time. A female cop came running in and said, "One of your guys is on fire. One of your guys is on fire." When we came back out, that's when the second building collapsed. We were able to run from that one because we weren't too close to that.

I hung around there for -- we couldn't get to the other side and couldn't get back nowhere. We had no radios. We lost our radios. We lost everything. Somebody from the news was down there.

After a while we were able to get a bus to take us to Berkley Hospital, and from there we

were taken to the Bronx.

Q. When you were down here on west side and Liberty, do you remember seeing any other EMS people down there that you recognized, know their names?

A. Yeah, Jefferson. Jefferson was down there. He's a medic.

Q. Is he from Battalion 20?

A. No, I forget the station he's from. I think he's from Boston outpost.

Q. Do you know who he was working with?

A. No, I don't know who his partner was.

Q. What vehicle number did you use that day; do you remember?

A. I believe it was 265.

Q. 265?

A. Yeah.

Q. When you got down there, that was between the two crashes?

A. No, it was after the second crash.

Q. After the second crash. Okay.

Was Jefferson --

A. He was there before me.

Q. He was one of the two medics that you

said you guys were helping out?

A. Yeah, we went to help him at first. He was there before. Actually they pulled up right before us. We were behind them. When they parked, they jumped out. They were told we had a firefighter with a crushed face. They ran to the side, and we parked like right in front of them, because they were directed to pull in front.

Then we went to help them. Then still we had to go and build the staging area.

Q. Right.

A. When we were going there, that's when everything started to crumble.

Q. Do you know where they were treating their patient at that point?

A. It was Cedar.

Q. Over on Cedar?

A. Yeah. It was there. I can't remember -- they were pulling the firefighter out from somewhere; I can't remember where. It was almost black.

Q. Where was the staging that you were directed to?

A. The staging was on, I believe here.

Q. On West?

A. In the hotel.

Q. In the hotel?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you recognize anybody in there?

A. We never made it to there.

Q. You never made it?

A. No. We got to about the middle of the street, and that's when we heard the rumble, people started screaming that it's falling, and I ran this way. I'm not sure which way my partner ran.

Q. Was it between the collapse of the two towers that you actually were treating the patient? You said something about a burn patient.

A. We never actually got a patient.

Q. No?

A. No.

Q. After the collapse of the first building --

A. Oh, yeah, the burn patient was after the collapse of the first building, when the female cop that ran into the building we were in.

I believe it was this one. I don't know what building this was.

Q. You were down here at Albany and West Side Highway?

A. Yeah, after the first collapse. I was able to get in an ambulance. We were able to get out because everything here was being crushed. A few of the ambulances were on fire. You could hear some of them exploding.

So after we got out of the ambulance, we ran to one of these buildings. Then after we came back out, we got about this far, and then that's when the second building collapsed.

Q. So somewhere between Albany and Carlisle was the building that you went into.

A. Yeah.

Q. And got back up to about Albany Street?

A. Yeah.

Q. And that's when the cop --

A. No. She came in the building.

Q. She came in the building?

A. Yeah. When we went back out, that's when the second building collapsed.

Q. Do you know where the burn patient was

that she was talking about?

A. No, no. I believe she said he was in a bus. He was still one of these buses.

Q. He was in an ambulance?

A. Yeah, but we never got to him.

Q. Your vehicle, 265, was that destroyed?

A. Totally.

Q. That was?

A. Totally destroyed.

Q. Do you remember any other EMS vehicles over there?

A. There was a bunch of them. I don't remember the numbers.

Q. Okay.

A. But it was like an average of eight buses parked at an angle, because we would just jump out, run in the building, and they would like come back. It was easy access in and out.

Q. Right.

A. There were about eight ambulances. We were in the front, because there were other ambulances there before we got there.

Q. After the second tower came down, what did you do then?

A. Then I came out, looking to see if you see anybody that you know or contact anybody. Then it was a few of us that had hung together. It was me, Jefferson. I can't remember the other medic's name. We were just waiting around to see if maybe somebody would come get us. We had no radios. We couldn't call anybody. That's it. We were just waiting.

After a while a chief came up -- I can't remember his name -- and told us wait here, they'll send somebody to come get us. We waited. Nobody ever came back. Finally we got a lift to the hospital.

Q. Lonnie Penn was your partner that day?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know where --

A. Yeah, from what I heard, he ran this way to the water, and at that time there were a few guys there that had boats and they took him to Jersey.

Q. So you pretty much didn't meet up with him again?

A. Until 10:00.

Q. Back up here at the building?



A. Yeah.

Q. Any other thoughts or opinions you'd like to add?

A. There was another guy that was running with me. I don't remember his name. He was messed up pretty bad. I think they said one of the guys that was in the hospital, he had a punctured liver. But he had a hole in his back and a broken wrist and he was running.

Q. Was he from EMS?

A. Yeah, he was from EMS.

Q. Yeah?

A. Yeah. But I'm not sure what station. We were in the bus -- the same bus that we were in, we got him in. We were going to start to treat him, but there was just so much stuff falling. We took him out. That's when we took him in this building. After the first smoke cleared, some people took him out. That's when we came back out. That's when the second building collapsed.

Q. Okay. That's pretty much it, and I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 8:25.

The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110127

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALWISH MONCHERRY

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

## A. MONCHERRY

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 22, 2001. The time is 22:12, and my Name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force, I am conducting an interview with the following individual...please state your name, title, and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York regarding the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

ALWISH MONCHERRY: My name is Alwish Moncherry, I am an EMT with the Fire Department of New York, I work out of Battalion 49 in Astoria.

Q: Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Can you please tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A: Of the events on September 11<sup>th</sup>, I would say it would have been about 8:30 or so (I'm not too sure about the time) I was at my 89 when we received the call. At first I heard over the radio, the towers had been hit. I didn't know what it was, I didn't think anything of it for a split second. Well, my partner didn't think anything of it, but then I told him, cause Kevin Barrett was my partner.

Q: Kevin Barrett?

A: I said Kevin, did you hear that on the radio? He said: hear what? Then I told him something happened at the tower. Next thing you know, five or ten seconds later, 9 Henry respond, please respond to the World Trade Center. Immediately we picked up and went. We didn't have time to write anything. Down 21<sup>st</sup> street, we

## A. MONCHERRY

reached the 59<sup>th</sup> street bridge. Central tells us to stand by at the 59<sup>th</sup> street bridge on the Queens side, until further notice. We're the first ones there, the other units 49 Charlie, 45 Adam, and 49 Victor were also called. I think all of the units out of this station were called. We were at the front of the line, 49 Henry, to wait for conditions 49 to show up and tell us where to go. Everything's happening really fast. I'm looking from the 59<sup>th</sup> street bridge, you can see the towers, you can see the smoke. The buildings just look like a cigarette basically. When we get the call to go over the bridge (I'm not too sure about the time) when we're on the bridge there's plenty of traffic. That's when we noticed the second plane hitting tower two. I just couldn't believe that that happened. So everybody was just trying to get there as fast as possible, as soon as possible, no matter what. A lot of fender benders en route, not us, but a lot of other cars hitting. A lot of chaos on the highway, on the bridge. Finally we get over, and we head down to the staging area. I'm not too sure, it was a Lieutenant or captain at the staging told us--cause 9 Henry is a haz-tac unit, I guess they wanted them at a certain place. They chose to put us originally on Vessey and West.

Q: Can you just indicate on the map with a number 1 where your vehicle was parked originally?

A: On the corner of Vessey and West. While on that corner, I'm seeing people rushing out of the buildings. Most of them appeared to be burns and, it was just hell. I can't really describe it. People were just pouring out. Thousands and thousands of people just coming out. And everybody seemed to have been injured in one way or

## A. MONCHERRY

another. Triage patients, that's all we could do. We didn't have enough triage tags for everybody either. At the moment prior to the first building collapsing, I remember hearing popping sounds. One of my partners was saying what's that? I saw the people falling and exploding on the ground.

Q: What was exploding on the ground?

A: Human beings. They were just falling from the sky and exploding like that.

Q: How close were you to these people landing?

A: I would say about 100-150 feet. People coming out of the buildings half burned, the fuel must have spewed down and hit some people. A lot of burns literally down through the skin to the bone. I had two patients on my ambulance, vehicle 111. FBI Agents were telling us to move our vehicle from the corner of Vessey and West, cause there was debris from the airplane which they needed for evidence. I guess it was NTSB, they wanted the area secured. There was nowhere for us to move the vehicle, cause there was debris everywhere. I know I ran over some sort of evidence somewhere. Pieces of metal from the plane. I tried, we moved it. I think now I was closer to the building, I would say about 50 feet from the building prior to it falling.

Q: Can you indicate on the map with a number 2 where you parked your vehicle the second time? If you can recall.

A: Let's see...here.

Q: Thank you.

## A. MONCHERRY

A: When this happened, the first tower starts to collapse. I didn't know this at first. My partner was on the corner, I didn't know his location at the time, cause I'm triaging. I have two people on my ambulance already. To my assumption, I thought, 49 Henry is a haz-tac, it's supposed to be there for a reason. I'm not haz-mat certified, but my partner is. All I had to do was triaging the patients. My first patient was going into shock and bleeding profusely. My second patient was an asthma patient, and her ankle and knee were messed up a little bit, but she was okay. I took care of her and she was okay after that. So I left the two of them in the ambulance and stepped out. Two other guys needed help, I'm not sure which unit they were. They needed some help to put the patient on the long board. As we're lifting her up, I notice people rushing towards us, and when I look up, I see the building coming down. It's almost hovering over my head in slow-motion. I'm like holy--- you know.

Q: You can say what you want, it's fine.

A: I just, I froze for awhile. I looked up and I couldn't believe when it started coming down. It was a decision that I knew I had to make, but it took awhile for me to do it. The building's coming down real fast, and it looks like slow motion. I had to leave. I turned around and I had to go. If I would have stayed and ran back to the ambulance, I don't know what would have happened. So as far as I know the people who were within that vicinity there, if they ran the wrong way, turned the wrong way, if they

## A. MONCHERRY

looked the wrong way, something could have either fell on them at that moment, or after a long time, from all the debris piling up, they would have been dead. Definitely. So I just ran. I turned around, I thought about my kids. My daughter, 5 years old, Imani. And my son, brand new to the world, one month old. And my wife, we just got married in August. I thought about them and I said I can't leave them. I turned around and started running. On my way running, I found a lot of people, and I helped out a few that I knew needed help. If they could run, just run with me. Just keep on going. Now it's like a dead silence, it's still clear, but it's a dead silence. And soon all you could see was a black smoke coming from all sides of the street. It hit me in the back, it hit everyone, it just blanketed us. No one knew what to do, we couldn't breathe. I didn't have a mask on, we didn't have time to get all that stuff. While I was running, my helmet flew off, my mask, radio. I found radios, I found another helmet that was lying around, I picked it up and put it on. I feel some lady grabbing my arm, we're trying to run. She tells me she has asthma. I say just hold on to me, keep going. In the dark I saw a light. I started going towards the light. Holding the girl's hand, we're just going forward. We get to the light, it's another EMT....

Q: We're gonna stop the tape for a moment, the time is 22:25....Resuming the tape at 22:26.

A: Well, I'm holding the girl's hand, it's dark. I can't breathe, I can't see anything. All you hear is voices, everyone screaming and yelling for help. I saw the light and I started going towards the light. It's a fellow EMT, I don't know his name. All I know is he had dreads. He looked horrible, he couldn't breathe. I was telling him to



## A. MONCHERRY

hold on. So I grab him. A few seconds later I hear shelter, shelter. So we all start going towards the voice, it was a bodega grocery store. We all went inside the store, they closed the door, gave everybody water and took care of them. Told everybody to not swallow, just gargle and spit it out. We waited a little while, treated as much as we could inside the store with whatever resources we had at the moment. Moments later, I'm not sure about the time, the smoke started to subside a little, just from the top you could see it clearing up a little, slightly. It was at that time that we heard police officers, I guess chiefs, telling us all, EMS units and fire, all you guys come on out, we gotta get the rest of the people out. So after helping out as many as we could in the store, I put my gear back on, whatever gear I had left. We ran back out, I had a tee-shirt, I forgot to mention, that's the only thing I had in terms of covering my airway. We went back towards the building, Tower One. I don't know where cause it's still dark everywhere. So, when I went back, I just started helping people out, any which way we could. I remember an African-American female, she had a four year old or a five year old daughter with her, and another child, I'd say less than a year old in the stroller. They're all covered up in stuff, in soot and everything. I'm looking at her, she's screaming, she doesn't know what to do or where to go. I told her, I just grabbed the baby that was in the stroller, and there was a police officer who was next to me, he grabbed the four-year-old, and we all started going towards the building. I think it was one of the court houses over there. We took her inside there. I was so...I guess it was the adrenaline kicking in, I just wanted to get her inside, out of that environment. I didn't even bother looking at the child, cause it was

## A. MONCHERRY

sort of covered up a little bit, so I figured it was okay. I was like get in, get out. Take the baby in there, daughter's in there and she's okay. I didn't have time to look at the child to be honest with you, and look at her, cause there were other people there. I just ran back out to help some more. At that time I bumped into my partner. I heard his voice out there, and we ran into each other. We just started crying right then and there, you know. And a couple minutes after that, another one of our partners out of at the station, Luis Diaz, was found, we found him. Luis was not himself to say the least when we found him. He didn't have his helmet on, and he was down crying. I knew it was him cause he has a bald head just like me. He has a shiny bald head, but it wasn't shiny. We found him, I hugged him, and we just cried together right there for about five minutes. I don't know how long, but it was a long time. After that we said we still have a job to do. We have to go back out there and help these people as much as we could, and that's what we did. Now I guess the second tower started coming down. Just by looking, I would say we were about 300 feet, maybe a little more, maybe 400 feet away from it. But it came down, and the same thing. Everyone started running. At that point I just didn't know what was going on and why this was happening. It just wasn't good. We were stuck there for awhile, we stayed together Kevin Barret, Luis Diaz and myself. We started finding people along the way, co-workers. We later found a captain, I don't remember her name, but I know she works out of Battalion 50 in Jamaica. I think she's a Lieutenant. We found her and she told us where the next staging area is, and we headed

## A. MONCHERRY

towards the next staging area. I don't recall where exactly it was. I know we walked a long way.

Q: Could it be here?

A: I think so, I think so. I know when the Lieutenant told us where to go, that wasn't the correct staging area, cause we were still too close to the buildings. They wanted everyone away from it. That's when there was a third building that collapsed around that time.

Q: Building Seven, which would be over here.

A: Okay, 7 World Trade, that one collapsed.

Q: 7 World Trade collapsed a little later.

A: Yeah, a lot later. That happened en route, while we were walking towards our unit.

Q: That happened at 5:25.

A: Wow. We stuck around there for a long time. I would say for most of the day and night. Later on that night we were told to go to Chelsea Piers. That's where the Emergency Room was, the make-shift ER. We went there, and we were trying to figure out who was missing. For a long time no one knew where we were. We were the guys missing, and everyone was down there looking for us. So at that time we formed a little group, from 10 to 15 EMTs, and we went out of this area to try to go back for the guys who were not accounted for. Like Carlos and Luis' partner Paul Adams.

## A. MONCHERRY

That was one of the people we were looking for while Kevin, Luis and I, he was the next person we were trying to find. We finally got that Paul was okay, I think I heard his voice on the radio and I told Luis that he was okay. We didn't know where he was. We couldn't find Carlos, but there was nothing else that we could actually do. But I felt like we should at least try, you know? At least try and get him. That's something that not too many people know about until now I guess. And that was it. We stayed there for awhile, I'd say we were released maybe 20 hours later. I haven't been back since. The only thing I keep is my boots. I don't even polish them anymore, they still have the ash on them. That's the only thing I keep as remembrance. And the smell on the ambulance...

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add on the events of September 12, 2001 prior to approximately 12:00?

A: No.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much for conducting this interview with me. This interview is being concluded at 22:40 hours. Thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

File No. 9110128

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LUIS SANCHEZ

Interview Date: October 22, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 22nd, 2001. The time is 2256. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

EMT SANCHEZ: Luis Sanchez.

MR. ECCLESTON: Your title.

EMT SANCHEZ: EMT.

MR. ECCLESTON: And your command.

EMT SANCHEZ: 49.

Q. Were you working on September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you please tell me in your own words about the details of that day?

A. Well, at the beginning of the day it was just like a regular Tuesday, just going to work, preparing for the day and everything for my tour, which was tour 2.

I'm not too sure what unit I was working, but my partner was broke in with someone else, and I had a new partner.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I think her name was Brandon. I'm not too sure if it was Brandon or not. I believe it was Brandon.

We started at 7:00. I think we started at 7:00. We just started at 7:00. We had a call for that day, which was a cardiac arrest. I think it was approximately 7:30. We went to the call, and everything went fine. There wasn't a cardiac arrest. It turned out to be an asthma attack. So we went in and helped the patient and everything. We took the patient to the hospital, and after that it was all clear.

We got cleared at about approximately 7:45, around there. I'm not sure what time it was. All I know is five minutes after we received a call saying that a plane just crashed into the twin towers, one of the towers.

My partner told me -- I looked at him like what's going on here? I thought he was playing around. He told me, look, it's serious.

We went to up to the park to get a good view of the towers. When I saw the smoke coming out of one of the buildings, I said, oh, shoot, it is real.

So he told me it's an MCI so we had to go to the command post and go along over the bridge to the place. The problem is after everything, we started heading up to the place, the towers, and there was about 20 units right behind us and police officers and firefighters, right behind us, right in front of us, everywhere. It was crazy, real chaos.

We just got there. When we got there, I didn't really know where we were at. It was one of the towers. I don't know if it was the front, back, side. All I know is there was a lot of people outside. People were hurt. People were yelling and screaming. We were right in front of it, about a block away from it, actually.

My partner told me not to get nervous, just stay calm, everything is going to be all right, it's going to be just like a regular call. I said okay. I asked him if we should stay



together, should we stay together. He said, just go and follow along with the patients. Just help whatever patients, who feels hurt, doesn't feel good. I said okay.

So I went out, and I was looking around for other patients, any patients that I saw to help out, because I had no experience. This is my second week on the job, and I had no experience at all.

I see patients coming out from the building, and I started, you know, just putting them in a safer place, which was a block away. I had a patient that had asthma. I had a patient that had a laceration on the forehead, and I was sitting him down and giving him O2 oxygen and trying to manage, do the best I can.

I was just looking at people. I saw EMTs helping out, and I was like good, now I feel more comfortable helping out. Finally I saw one of my friends who graduated with me. I saw him, and we started working together, which was good for me. We sort of had the same experience. We didn't know what to expect. So we're like, cool. We were both nervous and didn't know what to

expect helping out the patients and everything.

So all of a sudden we had this other patient come out of asthma, throwing up, vomiting, screaming and just yelling. She was just real nervous. We were just telling her it was going to be okay, it was going to be, don't be nervous, everything's going to be all right. We just gave her O2, and she seemed to calm down. But she was throwing up. We were trying to make her feel better, saying jokes, anything to make her feel good, better.

Five minutes later I just heard this loud noise. It was like an earthquake. It was shaking, and things was going down. I looked everywhere. There was nothing going on. I looked to the side, looked to my friend. There was nothing going on. When I looked up, I saw the top of the building floor by floor was coming down, collapsing. I was oh. (Inaudible.)

I looked at my patients. They were all there, just throwing up. They didn't know what was going on. I looked at everybody. They seemed like they didn't know what was going on.

All of a sudden I just looked up and

said this is for real, is this a dream or what? I'm like, what do I do? Do I run? What do I do? Pick up the patients? Call my partner? What I did was I screamed, I yelled. I said, "The building's collapsing. The building's collapsing. Everybody run."

What I did was just dropped everything I had the radio -- I had the radio -- and just ran, just ran as fast as I can before I get trapped between the buildings or anything. I just ran.

All of a sudden I see this firefighter who was helping a patient. They didn't know what was going on. He was looking down towards the patient. He looked like he was just like focused on the patient. She had a big laceration on her leg. He was right in front of me. I just pushed him to the side and just told him to run because the building was collapsing.

I just kept running. I just kept running for approximately 20 blocks after that, 20 blocks, kept running, until everything was cleared. There was smoke everywhere. You couldn't see anything. I just kept running until

everything was all clear.

Once I got there for about ten blocks, I was with police officers and I started to help them. It was about approximately 2:00 -- sorry, it was about 10:00 when that happened. I started helping out with the police officers. I bumped into one of my friends who is a police officer, and we just hugged each other. We were started saying, "Oh, my goodness, this is crazy. What's going on here?" We just heard about there's another plane that just hit Washington, D.C. We were getting nervous.

I started helping them out for about an hour, just directing the people, where to go, go to a safer place and not to panic, to calm down and everything. I was there with them for two hours. After two hours, I hooked up with paramedics. I was with them, they went to Bellvue Hospital, and I was helping out at Bellvue hospital, bringing patients in from the streets, for about two hours, approximately.

After that I was with -- we went south together. We went down to get more patients to bring to the hospital. We went down south. For

some reason I just couldn't find them anymore. So I saw some units from Brooklyn, some people that I know. So I hooked up with them for a little while, and they brought me over to Chelsea Piers. That's where we were just all stationed and doing triage.

From there on we just stayed all together. I saw more people that I graduated with and started helping them and just broke down. We both broke down and couldn't believe what we saw. It was just crazy, the things that we saw.

We never expected to see something like this, and we were never prepared for anything like this. We thought we were prepared for anything at the academy. In two weeks we just -- we wouldn't believe what we just saw that day of the 11th. It was really intense.

I was worried about my parents, calling them. I couldn't get in contact with them.

I got over to the station about 2:00 in the morning. I was working about 20 hours that day. I was exhausted, went home, just broke down. My mother broke down also. I said to

myself whatever God wants, if that's his will for this to happen, that's the way it's going to happen if that's the way he wants it. That's just the way it's going to be.

I tried to keep myself calm and everything. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

That's all that I saw that day, the things that I felt.

Q. Do you know where you were when the second tower came down?

A. The second tower?

Q. Were you in the area when the second tower came down or were you further away?

A. When we got there, I don't know if the first tower fell or not. What I know is when we got there -- I couldn't see the second tower. All I saw was the first tower. I don't know if it was the first or second. All I know is that when I got there there was a lot of people. It was one of the towers -- I can't remember whether

it was one or two.

All I know is approximately 15 minutes and the collapse, everybody just sprinted. Everything was a mess. I ended up -- people ended up in New Jersey, Queens, Bronx, everywhere. Everything was just all mixed up. From then on, I was with police officers and other units.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview in regards to the events that happened before noon?

A. Before noon? Not really.

Q. Okay. I thank you very much for conducting this interview with me?

MR. ECCLESTON: The time is 2308, and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110130

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ELOY ALBUERME

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick



MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 23, 2001.  
I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of  
New York. The time is now 0603 hours. I am  
conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT ALBUERME: Lieutenant Albuerme,  
Shield 108.

MR. RADENBERG: Of EMS Battalion No. 8.  
This interview is being conducted at EMS  
Battalion 8 regarding the events of September 11,  
2001.

LIEUTENANT ALBUERME: On September 11, 2001,  
I was assigned to an M.O.S. daughter who was sick at  
the school. Responded there. Before we responded  
there, I heard the call come down that an explosion  
occurred at the World Trade Center. Then I called my  
CO, and I advised him of such so he can respond.

At the completion of my assignment, I called  
citywide through my cell phone, advised the citywide  
tour commander that I was going to respond to the World  
Trade Center.

I responded into the World Trade Center  
southbound on 7th Avenue into West Broadway, which at  
West Broadway and Murray Street, I stopped to assist a  
unit that had eleven patients from -- that were injured

ELOY ALBUERME

due to the incident.

At the completion of that, I then went down to Barclay street, which I made a right to West Street, which I made a right, which I also encountered a couple of units, a few units that were sitting right there on West Street and Murray.

I asked one of the medics to have all the vehicles turn around facing northbound and to collect a key and make that as a staging area.

At that time, one of the trade buildings collapsed, and I turned right -- turned left on Murray Street, using the District 37 building as my cover, which at that time I was screaming out to everybody to come my way to use the building as a cover, and then after that I assisted (inaudible) for the people to be evacuated, and then I don't know how I got to Chambers Street, but I went down on Chambers Street, and we just started setting up triage area at the Manhattan Community College, so in case we had to take any of the personnel, and after that I encountered a couple of EMS personnel that had their cell phone on them, which I used their cell phone number as a communication device in case -- so that way we can talk to each other, since all the radio communication at that time was down.

ELOY ALBUERME

On my way to where the EMS command center was, I went over there and I tried to speak to an EMS chief that I have started communication, I had two different staging areas set up for ambulance to respond in case we need them.

At that time, I was told to go and see the captain. The captain then told me to go see the chief. The chief told me to go back to the captain, who told me I will be in charge of transport right at the Chambers command center.

After that, it just stayed there until 2:30 in the morning, return to the station, and I went home.

Q. The first unit that you met up with on Murray and West Broadway, do you remember what unit it was, EMS unit or a volley?

A. They were a vollie unit.

Q. A vollie unit?

A. Okay, they were a vollie unit, and then I had a 911 unit. I think it was ten charlie from -- sorry, from Lenox Hill, and I think one unit from St. Vincent's.

Q. And on West and Barclay, the units that were there?

ELOY ALBUERME

A. All EMS units.

Q. All EMS units?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember which units they were offhand  
or --

A. No idea.

Q. Recognize any of the personnel?

A. I didn't recognize no other personnel. That  
is why I asked who was the senior man, and I had to put  
a senior man in charge of that staging area.

What I did ask was turn around and face north  
so in case they have to transport, they had a clear  
avenue to transport, and as they were turning the  
vehicle around, that's when the tower building came  
down. I don't know which building came down, but I  
know one of the buildings came down.

Q. When you were on Murray Street itself, by the  
D.C. 37 building, any other EMS personnel with you?

A. No, I was by myself.

Q. You were by yourself? They all went north on  
the Westside Highway?

A. They all went north on the Westside Highway.

Q. With the collapse?

A. Right, with the collapse.

ELOY ALBUERME

Q. Do you know that chief and the captain?

A. There were a whole bunch of chiefs there.

The captain I just don't remember his name, but there were a whole bunch of EMS chiefs there.

Q. And they were up on Chambers?

A. Chambers, there is -- yeah, they established command.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. Basically no. I think that we should start doing more drilling on an incident like this, as far as I think that we haven't done in many years because they're too comfortable. It's not only keeping in practice to have a lot of (inaudible) to make sure that everything is done correctly.

You have proper training, like the army had the war games and things like that. We have this command, this system. We should have that more often, you know, and in a city anything could happen.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0609 hours, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110131

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ARTURO GONZALEZ

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 23rd, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC GONZALEZ: Arturo Gonzalez at Battalion 8 and I'm paramedic 3675.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 8 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th. The interview start time is 0634.

A. We start with -- we received a call to go down to the World Trade Center. The exact time I don't know. It was about 8:40, 8:45, around there. When we responded down, we went down West Street. We saw building number one had fire on the top floor. You could see that right actually from 34th Street.

Upon arrival we parked at West Street in front of One World Trade Center. That's where we stationed at. We took our equipment. We stayed there at least 24 minutes, more or less, give or take.

The second explosion came in building number two, in that area. We didn't actually see

the plane, but we heard the explosion. We were told to go into that building, Merrill Lynch right there, the building in the lobby to set up the triage.

As soon as we set up triage there, building number two went down, and all the windows in the Merrill Lynch lobby, they were all out.

We ran out of that building, and we went to proceed to the next building that was across the street. I'm assuming that's the American Express building we ended up on. And we went in that building, and all the glass exploded in that building too.

So we went out of that building and ran into the park that's behind the Winter Garden, in that area. It was too much smoke coming out of the whole area.

We ran to the Stuyvesant High School, that I don't see in the map there. We stayed a few minutes there. People started running up West Street. Me and my partner that was -- we switched partners because my partner parted -- Rick Perez, we decided to go back and get the



MERV. The exact location should be right here. So I'm not sure which street this is, Merrill Lynch on the right side.

Q. South side of the Merrill Lynch building.

A. We picked up the MERV there because it was abandoned because of the collapse of the building. We proceeded eastbound to West Street, and we stationed at Vesey and West. We were told to stop and treat patients, because patients were coming out of the area.

From that location, we stayed there all night up till 6:30 in the morning, 5:45 to 6:00 in the morning to be precise, treating patients there and treating members of the service and all the departments. So during that time we saw -- mostly we saw maybe two patients, three patients.

Then from there by mistake I took a walk up to this building here. I'm not sure what this is, one of these buildings, and there were 154 elderly trapped in the basement -- not trapped but they wanted to get out. We had to relocate it back to my commander and see how we could get them out. We decided it was safer to

stay there.

Then we went back to the MERV and just kept on treating patients all night, just back and forth. If you're asking for the time frame between the period of the plane crash and the second one and the building collapse, we were from the location into this building, switched to another building, ran to the park and then ran to Stuyvesant High School. Then we relocate to get the MERV. That's a big vehicle we had.

When we were trying to proceed north, we were stopped at Vesey and West to treat patients, and we didn't move from that location all that time.

Q. When you arrived here on West opposite number One World Trade --

A. Right.

Q. -- aside from your partner, did you see anybody else there from EMS or the Fire Department that you recognized? Do you know the names?

A. Not Fire Department. There were some Fire Department vehicles there. EMS, there were about four or five units there at that location,

standing there.

Q. City units or privates?

A. There was only one city unit, and the rest were voluntaries.

Q. Do you recall what unit that was, the city unit?

A. I think it was 7 Charlie.

Q. 7 Charlie?

A. Yes. 7 Charlie was the unit that was there, city unit. That's the only one I remember as a city unit.

Q. Did you recognize the crew at all?

A. Yeah, one of the crew members. No, both of them. I remember both. They're working here today, I think. They both were on the scene, yes. The others were voluntaries.

Q. Any EMS officers that you recall there, lieutenants, captains?

A. Yes.

Q. Chiefs?

A. There was Captain Stone. Chief Carrasquillo was there, Chief Kowalczyk. That's all I can remember offhand. At that time frame, those are the three I remember at the moment. In

the evening I saw most of the other chiefs, like Chief McCracken, the captains and all that stuff, Pinky. Lieutenant Albuerme was there too. But then the time frame from the plane crash and in that time, those are the three I remember.

Q. When the building started coming down and you went into Merrill Lynch, Two World Financial, did everybody that was with you on West Street go in there, as far as you know?

A. I can't remember, because there was so much panic and running, everybody was spread. I don't think everybody entered the building. I think some people just went up West Street and some people went out the other direction. They all were separating.

We actually stayed about 20 minutes here watching people jumping out of the building. Actually they were jumping, landing on West Street. There was about 20 -- we watched about 18 to 20 people jump out of the building, and they were landing on West Street or right in front of the World Trade Center.

Q. The concourse?

A. Yeah. They were just landing in front.

We could watch them and that's it.

Then when the second plane crashed, the explosion, they decided to move us -- move further up. Somebody was screaming that another plane crashed. The next thing is we're in here but running out of all these buildings because of the explosion and the crashes that every building was creating and spreading all over the place.

Most of the units disappeared and went up. I think what happened -- we're the only one that came back and picked up the MERV then stayed there. We were the only unit there for a while, up to maybe them, they came back to us.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add, opinions?

A. No. I mean, we were not expecting what happened there. They caught us by surprise. I just remember that one of the officers took all the keys to -- usually you park somewhere and the officer takes the keys. That officer was never found. Most of these vehicles were left on the scene because the reason is they didn't have the keys.

Q. They didn't have the keys.

A. The officer that took the keys, we never found. I don't know who it was, but we never found them at that time period. Luckily Rick had a copy of the MERV, and we wanted to move slow but we had to stop because we were the only ambulance active at that moment, the MERV. They told us to stop and treat people, and that's where we stayed all night.

Q. Okay. I thank you very much.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0643.

The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110132

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSE PEREZ

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 23rd. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're conducting an interview into the events of the morning of September 11th at the World Trade Center. We are in the lounge at EMS Battalion 8. The time is 6:04 a.m., and the interview is being conducted with --

EMT PEREZ: Jose Perez, emergency medical technician, Battalion 8.

Q. Jose, tell us your story.

A. From the beginning we were at 48th and Lexington or thereabouts when we heard it come over the radio that a plane hit one of the World Trade Centers. At first I just thought it was like one of those single-engine planes.

Then I guess because of all the excitement and everything we kind of just started to head down to some extent. I know all the south units were already down there. So we kind of UCA'd ourselves, and we ended up at 11th and seventh in front of St. Vincent's. We could see both of the towers. At that time when we got down there, they were both engulfed in flames.



At some point we just saw the first tower fall, and we were amazed. I was with my partner, Joe Valdivia, and we both were shaking our heads and were shaking. We decided to go down, and we took the West Side Highway. At some point we just couldn't go any further because people were starting to come up, so we threw it in park and basically just --

Q. Do you know about how far down you got?

A. I don't really remember. I think it was -- I want to say Bank Street -- actually it was further down, I think. I don't recall exactly.

Q. Okay.

A. So we just helped as much as we can with everybody that was coming out. Then the second building fell. I think for me it was just unbelievable, the whole thing. For the first few days it was something that I thought didn't really happen. I just had to convince myself that it did. I just had a good support system at my home with my wife and family. The people here, it was good to talk to.

I think initially the problem was

people who were coming out, some of us were missing. So we really didn't know what was going on with certain people here.

Q. A lot of misinformation. You had no idea?

A. Right. Especially after the first building fell because everybody was calling a mayday, and we didn't know who was actually close enough to be involved in all that. Luckily everybody from our station's okay. I knew by face certain people but not really personally. So it's pretty devastating all around.

I think that's basically it. It was traumatic. I think it was helpful being here for a while with everybody.

Q. I was going to say, were you working for like days after that?

A. Yeah, it seemed long for a few days afterwards, but it kind of diminished a little bit. We coped. We were able to help each other out and support each other.

That's basically it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to it at all?

A. No, just like I said, I think it was very unreal at the time. It seemed like it was a movie and it wasn't really happening. After a few hours, you know it's real.

Q. All right, Jose. I thank you for your interview?

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview we're concluding at 6:08 a.m.

File No. 9110133

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT NORBERTO TORRES

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 23rd. I'm Mike Tambasco, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. The time is now 0545 a.m., again, on the 23rd of October. We're in the lounge at Battalion 8 conducting an interview into the events of the morning of September 11th at the World Trade Center. The interview is being conducted with --

EMT TORRES: Norberto J. Torres, assigned to Battalion 8.

Q. Norberto, I just ask you to tell me your story.

A. On September 11th we had been on a job with a GYN. hemorrhage going into Bellevue when I heard over the radio that an airplane had struck the World Trade Center. We dropped off the patient, and as I de-coned the bus, I continued to listen to what the radio was saying, what was going over, the transmissions.

While we were still 81, I heard someone scream over the radio that another plane had struck the second tower. Then upon hearing this, me and my partner decided let's go buff the job.

We'll head down there. We'll see what's up.

We got assigned to the call, headed down there. As we approached, we saw the towers were -- smoke billowing, the towers engulfed in flame. We proceeded to where they assigned us to West and Vesey. Originally we parked at the end of the line on Vesey, which is further in front of the -- what is that place? The Tex-Mex place at the end on the right-hand side, we were right across from that.

Lieutenant Nevins at the scene informed me to move the bus, that he wanted it closer up so that we would be ready to pick up patients and head to the hospital if we're needed.

We moved all our equipment and got ready for whatever procedures that might be necessary, whether it's to send us further in or to set up a triage in front of AMEX.

As I moved the bus, we got closer to the zone. You saw people jumping out of the buildings. You saw debris everywhere, numerous injured personnel running towards us, everyone covers in ashes and soot.

We parked the vehicle, we got all our

equipment off, and we started heading towards the corner of West and Vesey. They were just throwing all the patients towards us, trying to get everybody out of the building.

We treated, as we went, numerous patients, putting them in the back. Those that couldn't walk, we carried those that needed to be on a stretcher while not -- we got them whatever help we could and got them far back.

The dust was intense, so I ran back to go get some masks, and we met -- there were chiefs and whatnot on the scene. One of the captains asked me to get all the masks from my vehicle and bring the masks to the personnel, the PD, whoever was there that didn't have a mask. I did that. I also went into other vehicles, got the masks, and gave masks to other people.

From there I was talking to J.R. Rivera at the time trying to get one of the chiefs a mask when the first building started to come down. All we heard was like a loud, thunderous roar. At first everybody was like, oh, no, another plane? There was all kinds of reports going on that there were numerous planes headed

towards the financial district.

You looked up and all you saw was a wall of debris blocking out the sky coming at you. We ran. I ended up in an outcropping of one of the buildings, just hiding until the debris blew past. It seemed like forever. It took maybe less than a minute or whatnot of just everything being blown past.

Around the corner where they had set up the new staging for West and Vesey, which was -- excuse me, I don't know the name of that.

Q. Probably westward, right, towards --

A. North End?

Q. North End?

A. Right. We were redirected there. They brought the MERV. One of the lieutenants asked for volunteers to go get the vehicles, so I volunteered. He described the car where he had placed the keys for the vehicles, because as you got there you were to turn over your keys. But since some of the vehicles -- a lot of the vehicles, the doors were locked, we needed a key. He described he had placed them on top of a blue Crown Victoria.



So I went back to the scene. Even though every car was gray, I found a Crown Victoria at the scene where he was. I started digging under the pile of debris that was at the wheel well. There was nothing on top of the car. We found the keys.

I handed off some keys to some fellow EMTs that were there, and we started to just bring the buses back around the corner. We got the majority of them back around the corner. There was only like one or two that were dead that wouldn't turn over.

As we did that, somebody called my attention -- as I checked one of the vehicles that was dead, I believe vehicle 470, it just wouldn't turn on, PD called my attention that there were a couple of injured people that were bleeding everywhere. They wanted some help bringing them around the corner.

I headed towards the corner of West and Vesey, and we started to lend a hand just bringing people around the corner, numerous injured. At that point I believe the second building came down. It was just another loud,

thunderous roar and everybody just running, scurrying. No matter what was wrong with the person, you just get up and run. If you can't run, I'll carry you, whatever.

We made it around the corner. We stood there. From that point Chief Kowalczyk, he came up to me and said they were setting up a staging at Chelsea Piers and he needed me to drive him up there. So I jumped in an ambulance with him and escorted -- well, I took him up to Chelsea Piers. From there we set up a staging area at Chelsea Piers with the ambulances that had been dispatched to that area over there.

Being that I felt I wasn't doing enough there by being at Chelsea Piers, I jumped on the back of the U.S.A.R. gator that was heading back towards the zone. From there I went over to the school where they said we had a command post. We had everything on Chambers and West.

I went there and informed the lieutenants that I was back, because as I had been told, I was presumed dead. Since they had a problem, they hadn't seen me for about a half hour. So I spoke to my lieutenants and told them

I was still amongst the rank and file. From there I was sent into the auditorium with all the other EMTs to prepare for whatever the scenario was.

We were in the auditorium of Stuyvesant High School for what felt like forever. It turned out to be like eight, ten hours. From there they just -- nobody basically knew what to do. This had never happened before, so nobody knew how to help or anything like that.

So they started to send out teams to go to the wreckage and to help with the morgue and to just basically search and see if there's still anybody down there. So we waited, and I managed to get on a team that was going to set up a forward triage in one of the hotels along I guess North End Avenue back there, River Terrace, maybe one of those hotels, apartment buildings.

Under the command of Lieutenant Eppinger, me and the fellow EMTs, we basically cleaned out an area, set up a treatment area for irrigations, cuts, bruises. We still expected we were going to get patients at that point. From there we just waited. We were there maybe five

hours. No patients. There was nobody coming out of there.

From there, being that I had been on the scene for like 22 hours, they decided to relieve people and send in fresh batches. So from there they just shipped me out. I came back to the station, took a shower, washed off all the soot, put on a brand-new uniform and went back down to the scene.

Q. Anything else you would like to put in?

A. No. I think I'll keep my mouth shut.

Q. Not a problem. Thank you so much for the interview.

A. No problem.

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview is over at 0556 hours.

File No. 9110134

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

DAVID BLACKSBERG

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 23, 2001. The time is 555 hours in the morning, and this is Richard Dun with the New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, and we are interviewing --

MR. BLACKSBERG: DAVID BLACKSBERG, EMT, Battalion 31.

Q. Can you just describe in your own words regarding the events of September 11, 2001?

A. About eight o'clock in the morning, we were driving by the base of the Brooklyn Bridge, my partner and I, and we sat, and an ALS vehicle approached us. We were sitting by -- we looked up and all of a sudden -- we were ready -- we heard something, and we looked up because we were right across the water, and we had seen Tower 1 at that time was already on fire.

The paramedic unit that we work with approached us and said, "Let's go." We went, and we were able to get onto the Brooklyn Bridge and cross. We were at the intersection, I guess, of West and Liberty, a little bit -- a little bit further north of that, so we were right across the street of 1 World Trade. We got out of the ALS vehicle, and I -- we parked our vehicles right across the street. We got

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out. We put our helmets on and our turnout coats.

We approached the building, and we heard some loud noise. We felt some rumbling, so we looked up, and there was another plane coming in. Went behind, I guess it banked around another building, so at that time we didn't really see it hit the building, but we heard it, and we felt it, and we saw it approaching.

We got to get back in our vehicles. So we got back in, and we only ended up going-- I guess it felt like a mile away, but it's half a block.

Q. Where did you first stop the vehicle?

A. We first stopped right on the west side.

Q. West Street?

A. Right on West Street, yeah, and Westside Highway.

Q. Right.

A. Right in front of 1 World Trade.

Q. Okay.

A. We were right in at the -- there's I guess what is it called, the median -- no.

Q. The walkway?

A. Yeah, the walkway in between the highway.

Q. That goes into --

A. No, the one that goes right in between the

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highway.

Q. By the Winter Garden?

A. Yeah.

Q. That glass thing.

A. Right. We originally parked over there right on the highway, and we ended up parking -- moving our vehicles, and we parked underneath the pedestrian walkway going from Winter Garden to I guess it was 2 World Financial Center, over there.

We parked our vehicles there. We got out, and we had made our own staging over there at that time, because everybody was split up, and we had to split up once we got out of our vehicles, and we saw that second plane hit. We had to move, and when we moved, we wound up making our own staging.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos, commotion, people running?

A. There were a lot of people running all over the place and --

Q. Running towards you?

A. They were running away. Well, toward us, toward other vehicles and just away in general. I didn't even know until a couple of people told me later that there were a whole lot of people crossing the



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Brooklyn Bridge, but I just knew everybody was scattered all over the place.

At that time, we had approximately four people approach us, and a fifth one was coming saying, "There's somebody coming that's really badly burned." I got the ALS unit ready, and I told them, and we had the person that was really badly burned -- I told them to get back onto the paramedic trunk, and they took care of him.

Q. Who was the ALS unit?

A. 32 Victor.

Q. Do you know their names?

A. Ellen -- I don't remember the last name -- and her partner. I don't recall. They are from Long Island College Hospital.

Q. Okay.

A. And so they took the burn victim while we were handling everybody else, and I had called over the radio telling them that we had formed a new staging area. I don't know whether they heard me or not, because there was a whole lot of chaos.

Q. Was this before either tower came down?

A. Yeah, this was way before either tower came down. This was right after Tower 2 had gotten hit,

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within two minutes I believe, if that long.

So 32, they took the burn victim to Cornell, and we were by ourselves, my partner and I, just getting overloaded with a whole lot of patients, and we had no idea if there was anybody else coming. We stabilized them as much as we could.

People were coming down with minor bruises. They asked if they needed to go to the hospital. I said, "If you're walking and can tell what's going on, you can, you know, just keep walking away. There is nothing much I can do for you right now, because I have a whole lot of people."

I don't know, you know, a whole lot of commotion going on, so finally everybody is saying, you know, there's people coming or there's somebody down in front of the building. I'm approaching the building, but there's a whole lot of debris coming down, so I decided not to approach, go into the building. Got as close as I could.

There was just bodies everywhere. We were watching them coming down. We heard them coming down, everybody screaming. A lot of debris. We didn't even know what it was. I guess it was metal, and papers and computers, I guess, we saw computer stuff on the

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ground, and we just watched and heard people jumping.

Someone said, "There's somebody that's still moving. Somebody is alive." I also saw a dog that was tied up in front of the building, and I approached. I got hit with some debris, so I decided not to go, so I had a lot of people that were walking. I said let me take care of them, because I know I can help them.

I did that, and in a couple of minutes or so a couple of units started approaching, and I told them where we had set up staging because they were also lost, so I was standing on the corner of West, of Westside Highway, and I guess just over by 2 World Financial.

Q. Did you see any officers, captains, chiefs?

A. Not for awhile. Not for awhile. I didn't see a chief, and then a chief came -- I believe he was a fire chief. I told him what we had, and he just took off. He said, "Okay, I'll notify whoever." I said, "Okay fine." Then another chief came, an EMS chief.

Q. Who was that?

A. I don't know his name. I don't remember. I took so many names down, and then it was just so busy. It was really chaotic. When the chief came, I told him what I had, and what was going on and what I had

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already done, and I already took down all the names of all the vehicles that had approached, and he didn't seem really to care what was going on.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Finally, we said -- okay, we parked our vehicles, and everything was clustered, and people everywhere, so finally we got some water.

Q. That's when I showed up.

A. Yes, that is when 32 boy had showed up, right when we started to get our vehicles set up.

Q. This is after the first building collapsed or --

A. Still before.

Q. This still --

A. Still prior to the buildings coming down. We were still there watching and hearing people jump, and patients were still approaching. We had cleaned up, you know, staged our vehicles by the water, so that if an emergency did happen that we could take off or we could take as many patients as possible.

There was, I guess, a fire started getting really bad, and a lot of stuff -- well, it was already

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bad, but we just stood by and watched people jump. Pretty much that's all we could do is just watch and listen, listen to our radios and see what would happen.

Q. Radio communication was okay? There was no problem with that, other than the chaos on the radio?

A. There was -- it was -- I guess it was all right because once they decided what was going to happen, because they -- finally they said that all -- all bosses would go on to citywide and everybody else goes onto Manhattan South. I was finally able to hear that, but they obviously didn't hear me say anything about where I was setting up staging, or didn't want to hear it or anything like that, and so we were overcome with so many people.

Once the vehicles were all set up for, I guess, a new staging area that we had set up over there, it was all set up. We just sat and watched, had people coming to us, and next thing you know, we started hearing -- just actually, there was a lot of rumors that a third plane was going to come in, so we were standing by looking up, listening. There was no third plane. The building started coming down.

Q. Was your vehicle still on the pedestrian walkway?

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A. It was actually half a block up now.

Q. Close (inaudible)?

A. But I -- everything from when I was parked across the street from One Liberty, right? When I was originally parked from One Liberty to when I finally removed it and cleaned up for the staging, there was only a block, block and a half, so it really wasn't that far. It was right across the street.

We started hearing the building, and we saw it tipping. It was just leaning.

Q. You saw it leaning?

A. Well, I looked up, and I thought I saw it leaning. Later on it was confirmed that it was leaning, and it was starting to come down, and so we just started booking. We ran as fast as we could, wherever we could. Everybody scattered all over the place. Nobody knew where anybody else went.

I looked -- I ran, and a whole lot of people, we were all running together. I looked back, and it was like it was this cloud of smoke, but it was like an avalanche, because you could see the smoke and everything tumbling right at you. You couldn't see up, you couldn't see back, and no matter how fast you ran, you couldn't out run it, and it overtook us, and

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finally I found my partner.

We grabbed hands, and we just ran, and then the next thing you know, we had people grabbing my arm. Then they split up us, got my other arm, and my partner, Juan Rios, they grabbed his arms and said, "Where are we going?" Because it was so cloudy and smoky, dusty and everything else that we really didn't know where we were going. We just kept on running.

Everybody was panicking, and I told them to -- we had babies crying, kids crying, adults not -- lost not knowing what to do, where to go. People are walking back. People are walking in circles. My partner and I, we were the only EMS people, fire people or anybody that we could see of, even PD. We didn't know where anybody went. Calling on our radio to find out where everybody is. Nothing. Everybody is over the radio, so you couldn't do anything.

Finally, we told people to cover their mouths with the T-shirts if they had, cover their mouths with their arms. People just wanted to sit down and do nothing. There was papers and the smell and everything else that was in the smoke that we didn't know about, you know, and the dust. We had them cover -- keep their heads down. People were closing their eyes while

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grabbing onto us. We had a whole chain link of people.

Q. All this chain link, was it all EMS people?

A. It was just my partner and I that were EMS, fire or PD. Just the two of us, and we started talking to people, trying to calm them down.

Q. Civilians?

A. They were all civilians, and actually quite a few of them were from 1 World Trade. They were from -- I don't know. One girl was telling me she was from the 63rd Floor, and another one was telling me she was from the 84th, and then there was other people, too. I don't remember what floors they told me from, but I remember these two, and they told me that they ran down, and I see they were still wearing high heels. How in the world are you running with these shoes on? So you kind of had to joke around a little bit, even though it wasn't really a joking situation, but you had to calm everybody down. Especially myself, you know. So I kind of used that to calm myself down and everybody else, joking around as we were walking now, because once you ran and the smoke and everything caught up to you, there was no use running, because it's already caught up, and you're already breathing the stuff in.



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Q. Did you get blown into something, or did you duck under the buses or --

A. We had finally found a couple of city buses that were just parked just before Battery Park.

Q. Battery Park City?

A. Yeah, we ran. Well, it felt like a lot anyway.

Q. This is going towards the Battery Tunnel

A. Okay, so we are down here by the park. We ran all the way down to the park. I can't tell you what you route we took, because we just --

Q. I don't think you really care.

A. Because we just kept going around, no.

We went by Battery Park, and we saw two city buses there, and I told them to get on, and they said, "Where are the buses going?" Everybody's asking where the buses are going. I said, "Doesn't matter, as long as, you know, you're sitting here, and you are away from everything else. Doesn't matter where the buses are going. Right now, doesn't look like they're going anywhere." Everybody is worried about where they were going. I said, "Well, the air is cleaner in here. It's going to be dirty, but it's cleaner in here than it is outside."

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At that time, we still didn't have masks. Nobody had masks. Finally we sat everybody in there. My partner and I went back out trying to find more people. A lot of babies, a lot of kids, adults. We told them all where to go. We were directing as many people as we could find that were lost.

Finally, we found two more EMS people, but they weren't working for the Fire Department. They worked for a private company. I think it was Cabrini, but I'm not positive.

Q. Building 2 still didn't go down yet?

A. At that time, we had no idea what was going on, because we were running, and we just heard the first building coming down, so I lost track of time of when the second building was coming down. It sounded like one big rumble, and then it just sounded like it just continued, and I was -- I wasn't really paying attention. I was looking at the sound. I was looking at the smoke and everything. I was listening to the people that were screaming. I didn't really hear another building coming down, so we ended up going into the park, getting people to come down and standing by the water, because there was a little bit of a clearing down there, and everybody standing by the water. We

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were standing by the water.

We were trying to go over our radios trying to find out if there was another staging area near us. I don't know how much longer that we found out, but it was quite a bit longer, a couple of hours, and now it felt like a couple of minutes, but now I know it was probably an hour or two.

We found out that there was staging right at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, which was half a block away.

Q. That is half a mile away.

A. When we started walking, it felt like it was closer, you know. I was just happy to see other people, I guess.

Q. That's good.

A. When we were still at the water, at the park, we flagged down a fire chief. Actually ended up being an EMS chief. I don't know his name. I don't know.

Q. It's okay.

A. I wasn't really thinking about taking down names, and we just set up over there, and there was carts inside, inside the park, the vendors that sell the water, and food and everything. Everybody was just taking water, trying to wash out their eyes, wash out

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their throats.

Nobody could breathe. Everything was stuck in their throats, and their eyes, mouths, faces and everything, so we were taking water, washing everybody as much as we could, because we didn't have any equipment, my partner and I, and there was no ambulance there, nothing, except for the command vehicle, and they didn't have much either. So we took whatever we could. A couple of boats started to show up, and we just put people on the boats, and everybody was worried about where they were going.

Q. You took injured people or --

A. Injured, noninjured, all civilians, but both injured and noninjured, both going onto the boats. Everybody was worried about where it was going.

They were going to Ellis Island, Jersey City and Staten Island. Those were the three places I remember the boats going. We were putting people on the boats. I told them it didn't matter where it was going. You'll always find a way home, and people were saying, "I just live a block away." I told them, "I guarantee you, you are not going to be allowed to go back in your apartment at least for a day, two days. If you are lucky, it will be two days."

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Finally we started kicking everybody -- not really kicking them, but telling them, pushing them onto the boat and telling them to go. I told them they had no choice. There really was no choice for them. They had to go, so everybody was going on. I said, "Where do you live?" This is the closest one. Brooklyn would be the closest. Staten Island would be the closest, or Jersey City, wherever they lived, just get on.

Finally, people started getting onto the boats, and we were actually trying to find another -- another EMS person, and I -- he worked for the Fire Department. We went and found a fire truck, took the fire hose and a wrench, because we thought we had seen a hydrant, but there was none, because we were trying to get some water to wash the stuff down and try to clean up, but there was nothing there, and next thing you know, everybody was walking -- there was another -- somebody had gone back and got an ambulance, so at that time there was a fire chief, no lieutenants, and about six EMTs from the Fire Department, and we were pretty much doing everything down at the water over there.

Then we walked over -- once we found out -- once we got everybody onto the boats, cleared that

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whole section off with the pedestrians and civilians, we went over to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. That's where we found out that a lot of people were going, and that was one of the main staging areas.

They started setting it up like a makeshift hospital there. People were coming down from the Trade Centers, being transported, and then we triaged them over there, and they were put onto the Staten Island Ferry and shipped over to Staten Island where I guess there was more EMTs over there.

Finally, there was really nothing much going on. People were coming in, but not steadily, and my partner and I felt useless. We were like, what are we doing here? There is nothing going on, nobody coming now. At that time there was nobody coming for maybe 20 minutes, it could have been longer. I lost track of time the whole day. The whole day felt like it was five minutes long.

We said there is nothing going on here. We made sure our names were on the list, because there was a lieutenant taking names on a list.

Q. EMS lieutenant?

A. EMS lieutenant at the Staten Island ferry, so I made sure our name was on the list. I wanted

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somebody to know that we were all right, you know, that were there. We started walking up and found out that we were -- that we saw some of the EMTs handing out masks to people that were still walking away.

There were still dust and clouds. Everything was in the air and like that for a couple of weeks. We started handing out masks. We were walking up handing out masks. It felt like we were doing something because we -- you know, we're just sitting in there doing nothing. We walked up and we ended up -- it was a -- there was an ambulance from Midwood, and they were going -- they said that they were going to go up to ground zero.

At that time, we didn't know what it was called, but they were going to go up to the area, which is now ground zero. We said, "All right, can we hop aboard with you?" And he said, "Yes, absolutely."

We took the bus right up, took the ambulance up there, and we found out that staging was now at One Liberty, and Juan and another EMT ended up walking back. My partner Juan, he walked back. Rios walked back, and I stayed up there, because I knew Juan, and I knew the other guy that he was with, that also works at the station, they were walking back, so I knew that

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they would be all right. They were partners, and they saw me going with the lieutenant and other EMTs, so we had split up. My partner and I split up a lot, but we ended up finding each other somehow. At that time he walked back, and I stayed.

I had a radio. My partner lost his radio and his helmet, everything at the same time, so it didn't matter, but I knew that --

Q. Fine.

A. I stayed up there, and I had a radio, and I was calling making sure everybody was all right. I had a cell phone on me, calling back and forth, and next thing you know we were on the rubble digging and getting fire, and PD and everybody else that was getting hurt. Meanwhile, some of us were hurting.

Q. And this point was it towards the end --

A. This was actually about -- I don't know. Maybe three o'clock in the afternoon. I had already gone into overtime for me. I ended up staying until the next morning. I stayed. It ended up being about 25 hours that I was there.

I tried to get a half-hour nap, but you can't, because you couldn't breathe. Anyway, we had some mess. They were like paper.



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Q. How did you ever get back to the station?

A. Well, I found another EMT, and in the morning when we just said that we were exhausted and ready to come back, he said, "You can walk to the Brooklyn Bridge and come back" and I said, "Well, I know that there is a vehicle down at the Staten Island Ferry, because that was mine." Somebody had moved it earlier in the day, and I had the key, so I said, "If we're lucky, the ambulance is still there. I know I still have my key on me."

He said, "All right, let's try it." We got down there, and the bus is still there, but there was all this soot and papers and everything still on the vehicle and inside. We were wearing our masks inside the vehicle. I was driving maybe three miles an hour, and everything is blowing all over the place, and we finally made it back, and the next thing you know, I had lieutenants and everybody telling me I was missing for nine hours.

I called them. I spoke to them, but I guess in the chaos, nobody really knew where I was or what was going on, but I ended up making it back, and I'm all right. We still felt like -- I mean, I still feel like I didn't do enough. I know I did a lot.

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Q. A catastrophe like that, I don't think anybody can actually feel they did enough, you know, so much going on, so, you know. You were there for 25 hours.

A. We were hands on the whole time. We were doing something, or we walked around or we were helping out wherever we could. We had those power bars that ended up making their way up. Next thing you know, I know people were having hot meals. I don't think I could have eaten at that time. I wasn't able to eat anyway for a long time.

Q. We want to thank for you your cooperation in this.

A. Thank you.

MR. DUN: The time is 6:18, and that's going to be the end of interview.

File No. 9110135

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FRANK PASTOR

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 23, 2001. The time is 6:25 a.m. hours, and this is Richard Dun of New York City Fire Department, working with Marissa Abbriano. We are conducting an interview with --

MR. PASTOR: FRANK PASTOR, EMT D, from Battalion 31.

Q. At this time, we would like to -- of the New York City Fire Department. At this time, we'd like you to describe the events on September 11.

A. Okay. September 11, that Monday morning, I reported to work. I came to the station, and let me just say this, the lieutenants here still break my chops, because that morning I came in, and I said to them, "I think we are going to be busy today." And they said to me, "Why?" I says, "Well, it's going to be 9-11," and from thereon -- I remember our normal routine in the morning, go get our breakfast, and we go sit and we cover Red Hook, so we had the view of the city. We were sitting there, and we were looking at the city. All of is sudden my partner says to me, "Frankie, that plane seems to be low."

Q. What unit were you working that day?

A. We were working 32 boy in Red Hook. We had

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the view of the city, and she yells out, "Frank, that plane just hit the building."

Q. Who is she?

A. My partner is Mala, Mala Harilal, and I look up, and I can't believe what I'm seeing. I get on the radio, and I said, "32 boy, if you need us, we're available. We can go right through the tunnel." As soon as I seen this, I got on the phone, and I dialed the number to call my wife to let her know what's going on. We were standing there in awe. We can't believe what's going on, and she says -- and I remember my partner, Mala, saying again to me, "That other plane is low." I don't know how much time, 10, 15 minutes, and we seen the other plane hit.

Q. You're still in Brooklyn?

A. We were still in Brooklyn. They haven't called us. Now they say, "32 boy you're going." I back up the vehicle. We start heading towards the tunnel. We hit the tunnel. In the tunnel, we're stuck, and I can feel the tunnel vibrating. I'm aware it's already chaotic.

We don't know why we are stuck in the middle, but in front of me there is a big ESU truck. I look behind me. There is an ESU truck behind me. They are

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blowing their horns. We can't see nothing, but we were in a standstill. What's going on? The problem is that you have the three lanes coming out or going in, and only one coming out. They're stopping traffic so we can get through.

As soon as I get on the other side of the west side -- I'm the driver. I come out of the tunnel, and I just see -- I told my partner, "I just saw somebody's torso on the floor," and my partner said, "No, you're kidding." I says, "It's not a dog." I thought it was a dog, but I saw a torso with no arms and no legs, just split open on the driver's side.

I go through. Guys are flying by. Emergency vehicles are flying by, so I see that -- I see which is 31 David's ambulance over towards the west side. I pull over, which I believe is going to be the first staging area. We didn't know at the time if it was or not.

I remember pulling over to the left. I saw that they're underneath this walkway, and I put the ambulance -- I saw their ambulance underneath the walkway, which at the time it seemed to be a good idea, because there's debris, there's stuff falling. I remember seeing a computer coming out the window and

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hitting the ground, breaking the windows.

We don't know what's going on. I pulled the bus over behind them, and I look up, and I'm saying -- you got this gut feeling saying we don't belong here. We're too close.

Q. The two buildings were still standing?

A. The two buildings are standing. There's flames coming everywhere, so I said, "You know what?" I told my partner, Mala, "Let's get suited up," and we gotta go.

Q. What do you mean suited up?

A. Get our equipment.

Q. Turnout coats?

A. Turnout coats, everything. I remember putting on my bulletproof -- I have the outer carrier on the bulletproof vest. I remember putting that on, and I remember putting my helmet.

I saw 31 David. They're treating somebody in that first area underneath the walkway. There is stuff hitting the overpass, and I run over to them. I said, "Guys, I'll be right back. We're going to have to move these vehicles. We got to get out of here."

I remember running back to where we think -- they're parked underneath this walkway here at this

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time.

Q. Liberty Street walkway?

A. Liberty Street -- or no, I -- yeah, this one here. There's debris falling on it. The windows are shattering. So I said, "I'll be right back. I'm going to go find a commanding officer, and we have to get out of here."

I remember seeing a lot of Hatzolah ambulances. There was a couple of EMS ambulances, a lot of private ambulances gathered in that corner. So I turned around, and I ran over. I remember seeing Captain Frank D'Amato. He was the one -- I said, "Captain, we have to get these vehicles out of here." He's looking at me, and he says to me, "You're in charge of taking all these vehicles and getting them out of here."

There had to be 10, 15 vehicles. I says, "Okay." Now all the equipment is out. Everybody has all the equipment out. Stretchers are out. We have to put everything back in. What it seems to me eternity, we moved the buses another half a block up.

As we moved the buses up, I'm coming back. He said, "And make sure everybody comes back with the equipment. We're going to start a staging area."



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Seems to me that they're going to start detouring us towards the building, going closer towards the World Trade.

It must have took us, I would say by the time we moved the last vehicle, half an hour, 40 minutes, would have seemed to me, pulling the vehicles down and getting all the equipment. That's when we hear, "It's coming down. It's coming down." We didn't even have a chance to turn around.

The cloud is coming down, and we get buried. I remember being in the dark on the floor. I remember getting on my Nextel, calling my wife back, telling her I'm okay. "I can't see. I can't see my hand in front of my face, but I'm okay."

We must have been in the debris -- it didn't clear for about half an hour, 45 minutes. I remember running into Battery Park in the -- everybody is running, people falling. I remember falling down. I remember I lost my helmet. I didn't know where I was.

I remember running into a lobby in the financial district somewhere. I was the only EMS personnel in there with a bunch of women and children crying, and people saying to me, "Help me, help me. We can't breathe." I had no equipment. All I had was my

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pouch. I remember I had a bottle of water with me, and I had it in my pocket, and I remember doing this clearing my face, people are coming up to me in the lobby, saying, "Help me, help me. I can't breathe. I can't breathe." I'm looking around to see what I can do.

I remember opening up this door. There was a slop sink. There was clothes hanging. I took the clothes, and I started soaking the clothes, wetting them, started cutting out strips, giving it to kids, giving it to the mothers. I must have ripped everybody's clothes that was hanging from people that work for the maintenance department. I remember being those gray shirts, those uniforms, cutting them all up. I found a watering -- a plant. What do you call those?

Q. Watering can.

A. People were coming to me, dousing everybody. I'm taking control of the bathroom, because it's chaotic. I can't let nobody in there because it's going to be -- they are fighting for water. They're lining up for me. I'm cleaning them off, giving them rags, cleaning them off.

I'm looking at the door. You can't fit

FRANK PASTOR

nobody more in the lobby. There had to be 500, 600 people in the lobby.

Q. What lobby are you talking about?

A. I remember running. I'm in here, so we were -- at first we were here. I moved the buses down the block here. When we moved the buses further down in here somewhere --

Q. Gateway Plaza?

A. Yeah. These guys were here at one time. Then we moved them here. Then we finally got them all down like another block and a half away. This is, I think, Albany Street and South End.

Q. South End Avenue and Albany.

A. Okay, somewhere in here, and the reason I know that because I've gone back to ground zero a couple of times and I remember saying this is where I ran. This is where I remember running.

In here somewhere I remember going into a lobby. That's where we started soaking the people up and giving them stuff. I must have been in the lobby half an hour. Everything seems to me like half an hour, an hour. I remember people gathering around me because the radio is still on, and that's the way they can hear communications. Safety, I guess.

FRANK PASTOR

They were all gathering. I said let me lower this, and I have to try to get out of here. As I tried to get out, they were blocking the door and said, "You can't leave us." I finally managed to go back out, and I'm walking back towards the green. Everybody is coming. I don't see no EMS personnel still.

Q. Did you see fire personnel?

A. When we started going, I lost my partner. I remember running into three fire zebra, a unit, and they had Scott packs. The HAZ-TAC unit, and I know the guys. I remember seeing Joe, and I seen Eric, and I said to Joe, "Joe, give me some --" He gave me some oxygen. I was covered completely.

I remembered taking my helmet off and putting the flaps down when I was running, but I remember stuff hitting me, but then I lost my helmet, so now I got my head full of plaster, after doing all this. I remember running into the guys. They gave me oxygen, and as I'm walking back, I see on the floor stumbling Chief Grant. He's got a non-rebreather on, no O-2, no nothing. He's just stumbling on the floor, and I grab him, and I pick him up, and he says to me, "What do I tell these people?"

People are still running. The flames are

FRANK PASTOR

still coming around that bend. When you walked down Battery Park, there seems to be a bend. It seems to be like when you're going to walk back towards the World Trade Center. He said, "Keep them going. Keep them going. Keep them walking," but it seems to me we were walking back towards the area.

I remember telling him we can't go that way. He says, "What do you mean? What do I tell these people?" I says, "We're going to have to stay here." We were in a grassy area. I remember being on the grass, and I look over, and I thought it was an ambulance.

I lost my footing, but it's a fire boat with the lights on coming, and these Liberty shuttle, whatever you want to call it.

Q. The ferries.

A. The ferries. They are yelling out, "I can take 75. I can take 200." That's when we started putting the people on the boat.

I lost Chief Grant. I lost his aide. I lost my partner. These guys, I don't know where they were. I walked back towards -- when I'm walking back towards the building, that's when I ran into more EMS personnel.

## FRANK PASTOR

Q. This is after both buildings came down.

A. Well, we didn't know it was two. We didn't know that both of them came down. We remember hearing the rumble, and it seemed like it was a continuous rumble, so we didn't know if it was one, or two or three. We didn't know.

We found out that it was both after when we walked back towards the area that we didn't see nothing standing, just the mountain of dust and debris.

Just walking back towards the area, now you start seeing personnel. I remember seeing people coming back with water, EMS equipment, and that's when we just got together and started walking towards the ferry, and that's where we spent the whole day.

That's pretty much the whole story.

MR. DUN: I want to thank you for your interview, Frank, and your cooperation.

At this time, the time is 637 hours, and this ends the interview with Frank.

File No. 9110136

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BRIAM SMITH

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BRIAM SMITH

MR. DUN: Today is October 23, 2001. The time is 813 hours.

I am Richard Dun, New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, also New York City Fire Department. We are conducting an interview with --

MR. SMITH: BRIAM SMITH, EMT, 5480.

Q. Brian, can you describe the events or things that happened on September 11?

A. Yes. Tell you the story now?

Q. Right.

A. You want me to follow this thing?

Q. You know, just go through it, and if you remember things, you know.

A. Initially, we -- like I said it before, we had gotten off of duty at quarter of nine. I was going out to my vehicle to drive home, and we -- my partner and I saw the -- right after the first tower had been hit, and so we came back inside, and we told them. It hadn't even gone over the radios yet, because initially he didn't -- he thought that we just --

Q. So you actually saw the first plane go in?

A. I heard the explosion and looked up, and then I saw it start to billow out.



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So I came back inside, and I told my lieutenant, Lieutenant McCarthy -- he was the desk lieutenant -- and I told him I was going to go inside and get changed, put my uniform back on, because I was in my civilian clothes, and that we needed an extra unit, and we need to go back out, and, like I said, he initially didn't believe us, but then a couple of seconds later they came over the air with the announcement, you know, "Units, an MCI has been announced the Borough of Manhattan," so on and so forth.

So I went inside. I got changed into my uniform real quick, very quickly and very sloppily, I might add, but we went back into the office. I grabbed keys. My partner was outside. He was checking the back of the ambulance, because he was going to be teching, he's not evoked, so he was in the back, and he was going through all the stuff to make sure that we had what we needed just to get out on the road. Went in and logged on the computer right away.

Before I left, my lieutenant told me that we were going to be 31 Mary, and if they needed us, they'd call us, so we got on. I logged on right away and told them that we were the next unit available if they

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needed us, and they told us to proceed to the MCI in Manhattan.

So we left the parking lot, and we started going over the Brooklyn Bridge, and we made it down that -- it was heavy traffic, but normal Tuesday morning traffic, but right by the foot of the bridge, it was pretty congested, but with vehicle traffic. I guess because they -- the police had shut down all the vehicle traffic going over -- to allow pedestrian traffic there, I guess going over the bridge, so everybody was bottled up, but I was able to drive up on the sidewalk a little bit and make my way to the bridge, and they just waved us right through, so we were going over the bridge, and when we were -- when we initially left out of the station, central gave us a cross street to stage. They gave us a spot where they said they were going to have EMS staging, but again, like I said earlier, I'm not very familiar with lower Manhattan. I don't know the street names or, you know, it's not like upper Manhattan where there are numbers, and that's easy. It's a little tougher down on the low side if you don't really know your way around.

So my partner was trying to look at the Hagstrom's and trying to figure out, you know, where we

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were going, and, like I said, going over the bridge there was no other traffic besides us, and the both of us were, like, looking out enroute to the alarm. We see the -- at this point only the one tower was hit, and there was all kinds of stuff coming out of it. Looks like paper, and it's smoking, and we were going over the bridge, and again, like I said, my partner, he couldn't -- we couldn't figure out exactly where we had to go once we got off the bridge, so there was an unmarked police car coming up behind us. He had the light going, and I said, you know, just follow this guy. He's got to be heading to the same place.

So we -- so I said all right I'll just follow him in. I followed him in. I got off the bridge. We circled around, and we started heading in this direction, I guess west. I don't know what street we ended up on, because I don't really know where it drops you off when you get off the bridge, but all I know we ended up somewhere down, like, I guess, in this vicinity because where we initially stopped when we were heading south, you could see down here.

I mean, it was -- you know, there must have been a crossing somewhere, because you could see there is, like, a foot bridge or something somewhere around

BRIAM SMITH

here, and you could see the tower. No, it was right here. I think it was Cortlandt or one of these streets. I don't really know.

So we had stopped because you could tell once you got close there was thousands of people in the street, you know, like they were everywhere.

Again, I mean, all we wanted to do was find out where we had to be staged and where they were going to set up the EMS staging, and we got flagged by a MetroCare unit, and they said that, yeah, some guy's having a heart attack. He had like a self-defibrillator, and it's, like, you know, it had defibrillated him six times, and I guess they thought that we were an ALS unit, because I told them -- I said, "Listen, we are just another BLS unit. You know, we can't do anything more than you guys can. We can't tie up two ambulances and four EMTs with one guy having a heart attack. I mean, you know, who the heck knows what the heck is going on over there."

While all this is going on -- and again, I only know this because of how many times I kind of replayed it and trying to fit everything into the time of events.

The second plane has to hit either as we are

BRIAM SMITH

getting off the Brooklyn Bridge or just as we are meeting that throng of people, because by the time that we get down to Liberty Street, the second tower is already hit, and, like I said, going over the bridge, only the one tower was hit. So, I mean, it must have happened in just, you know, that minute or so that we made our way over to Manhattan.

Like I said, there were a lot of people, and we could see the trade center. Again, like I say, I'm kind of confused by the whole layout. As many times as I look at this map -- this is actually one of the best maps that I've seen so far, but we start making our way down, and we ended up a couple of blocks away from the trade center when there was -- like, it looked, like a court building or something on the right-hand side as you are going down Liberty, and because there's steps going up, and there was some police there, and there was a fire truck.

Q. Maybe that was Liberty Plaza.

A. It might have been. I don't know.

Q. Liberty Plaza is right here.

A. That might have been it. Do you know if there were steps over here?

Q. Yeah, there's steps. Black marblite, a dark

BRIAM SMITH

color building?

A. Yeah. I think that's it. Might have been this.

Q. So you were on Liberty and Church, Trinity?

A. Liberty and Trinity.

Q. Which turns into Church.

A. Right. So we are -- like I said, I'm kind of guessing, but we were basically, like, right here, and there is a -- I think it was a sergeant or a lieutenant, I don't recall, but he was directing some kind of traffic. I think he had a helmet on, but I stopped, and we asked him. I said, "You know, sergeant, do you know where they are setting up staging?" And he tried calling on the radio, and he tried, and it was so much radio traffic at that point.

Like I said, it was bedlam, you know, at that point. It was just, you know, crazy. Nobody really had a clear sense of what the heck was going on. In fact, when we were going over the bridge we were hearing reports on the radio that after the first tower had been hit, we heard that it was a plane that hit it. We heard that two planes hit at the same time. We didn't know if a bomb went off. We didn't know exactly what was going on. It wasn't like you could see a wing

BRIAM SMITH

sticking out of the building. You know, it wasn't anything obvious.

So we went to -- we were there, and the guy said to us -- he said "Listen, I don't know where they are setting up staging, but I haven't seen any ambulances down this way, and I know that there is -- that they have some people that are hurt at the 10-10 house," and he said, "No ambulances or anything down there, so, you know, maybe you could do something over there."

So I said, "All right, we'll go down there." So we went down. We went up to the 10-10 house. As soon as we got there, we backed in the engine bay, like you guys have seen where it is, so if you are looking at the front of the building it's the engine bay on the left, and there was a captain there, one of the fire captains. He wasn't in turnout, but I said to him, "Cap, listen, you know --" because, like, he was captain at the house there. I don't know if he was from Ladder 10 or from Engine 10, but we backed it in, and the guy said, "Yeah, we got a bunch of people injured in here, seven or eight people, some of them hurt pretty bad. If you guys want to grab a couple of people and run."

BRIAM SMITH

I said, "All right. Let me get out a take a look," and the guy said, "Just make sure you back it all the way in, because there was a lot of debris, and there is a lot of stuff going over the building."

Like I said, by this point, Two World Trade Center is on fire. You know, like you can look all the ways up to the top, you know, I mean, there's quite a bit of damage up there. Like I said, the second plane had already hit it.

Q. People jumping at that point?

A. Not when I first got out of the ambulance. They were plenty of jumpers to come, but not at that point. If there had been, you know, like I said, I didn't notice.

Q. Was there a lot of debris when you were pulling up into the firehouse?

A. Yes.

Q. You saw a lot of debris?

A. A lot of debris on the street. All the ways over here.

Q. All the way up to Church?

A. Yeah. I mean, I wasn't crazy. It wasn't like I had -- I mean, I could drive through it, but, I mean, I had, you know, to kind of go around a couple of



BRIAM SMITH

bigger pieces of debris.

So we backed into the firehouse, and we got out, you know, after a quick assessment of how many patients were in there. I kind of guesstimated by how much time had passed from the initial incident. I mean, again, like I said, coming over, only because I'm not really familiar with the way the things are set up, I thought that this tower right here is the tower that I saw burning on the way in. I don't know that it's this tower burning, because when you look at the bottom and you look up, it's tough to get a sense of where it is in proportion to the top of the tower.

So I figure maybe 20 minutes went by, 15 minutes. Like I said, it's kind of hard to tell, because time is kind of like -- it was like in slow motion, but we got out. I got a quick assessment of the amount of patients in there, you know, immediately, and, like I said, some of them were pretty bad, so I said to the captain -- I said, "Cap, listen. I haven't seen any ambulances over here either, and what we are going to do is, being that everyone is going to be familiar with the firehouse over here, you know, we are just -- we will take this station over, and we are going to -- my partner and I are going to set the

BRIAM SMITH

station up as a triage station, and I'm going to radio out to dispatch, and we'll let them know what we are doing, but I need a few guys to give us a hand," and the guy's -- you know, he was, like, whatever you need, you just let us know. We will do whatever we got to do. And I said -- I asked him if he had anybody there that was medically trained. I figured there was an engine company there that maybe they have some CFR guys. He said, "I don't have anybody, no CFR, nothing." He's like, you know, whatever you got, you got.

There was a volunteer firefighter from Commack on Long Island. He worked in the trade center. He came over, and he's, like, you know, trying to offer his services, I guess, and, you know, so the captain gave this guy to us to help out. He said the saying thing, like he wasn't medical or anything. Like he knew CPR or something. So I don't know what his last name is. I just know his name was Rob, but --

So I said to the captain -- I said, "All right, listen. Again, we are going to take the station over in the name of EMS" and I don't recall how I told him we were going to commandeer the station, but like I said, he was pretty willing to go with it.

BRIAM SMITH

So I said to him -- I said, "I need every chair in the station, you know, whether kitchen chairs, chairs like this, you know, chairs in someone's office, rolling chairs. You name it. I need every single one. I need it set up behind the ambulance. I need it to look like a movie theatre. It's got to be nice and neat, because that's for the walking wounded as they start to make their way into the firehouse."

I said, "I also need every pillow, every blanket and any of the mattresses that you can get from any of the bunks upstairs. No metal frames or nothing, just mattress, and we are going to take the entire other side of the engine bay and just lay them on the ground. It's got to be nice and neat, and that was where we were going to start putting unstable patients and our critical patients."

My partner and I are going to start MCIing these people. We are going to start triaging them. So we did. Like I said, some of the patients were -- some of them were, you know, hurt not too bad. I mean, you know, like, injuries that were significant, but nothing life-threatening. Some bad lacerations, some --

Q. Walking wounded.

A. Yeah, walking wounded kind of stuff. There

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were some that were worse. There was one lady who was burnt up pretty bad. She had her shoulder -- all the skin off her shoulder was burnt off. Parts of her arm, her leg, her hair was all burnt, and I remember her fingers were burnt also, and, like, when they swell up when you get burnt real bad.

In fact, the guy, Rob, I said to him -- I had to show him how to use a ring cutter, because I had to cut the woman's rings off because they were swelled up so badly, and she was, like, in shock, you know. She was just sitting here like this while we were cutting the rings off, and I know it had to hurt, but she didn't -- she looked like she didn't feel a thing, and the plasma was just, like, dripping just off her finger, you know. It was -- she was burnt pretty good.

So we dressed her wounds, me and this guy Rob. My partner -- there was an Oriental guy. His name was Fu, and this guy had a broken hip, at the very least a dislocated hip. He had a pretty significant hip injury.

Q. Were there a lot of people coming into the firehouse looking for help?

A. Yeah, there were a lot of civilians. There

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were a lot of civilians that was still just kind of near the front of the firehouse that weren't triaged yet. Like I said, we -- I mean, between the two of us we must have maybe got six, seven, eight triage tags written out, and, you know, the MCI tags, and put on people. I mean, name, injury, and then we rated them, pulled the tag off at the bottom.

So we went to -- while we were doing that, like I said, this guy, the Oriental guy with the broken hip, I showed my partner real quick how to immobilize it with a KED, so he immobilized -- he started to immobilize the fracture with a fireman. The other fireman set up the chairs behind the ambulance, started setting up the blankets and everything else.

Q. At this time, the buildings were still standing?

A. Yeah, they were still standing, and it's a shame. If the buildings didn't come down, you know, I know that some, you know, some EMS captain or chief would have walked by and said, damn, this is a nice triage station. I mean, it was looking pretty sharp.

So to answer, I guess, next question. That's where we parked our apparatus, and we didn't really get too much in the way of civilian reports, but, like I

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said, I spoke initially to that captain. He gave us some firefighters to work with. He was sending guys outside, and at this point is when I started seeing jumpers, because the civilians that were still out by the front were screaming, "Oh, my God, my God," and then I walked out to the front of the firehouse, and then they were just, you know, hit, you know, just coming off the building, and, you know, hitting the ground maybe 20 feet away, whatever it was.

So I said all right. I got to go back inside, and I told the captain also to let any of the firemen know, because they were all up and down the street. They were everywhere, and I said to him, "Cap, listen, just tell your men, tell anybody else that walks past the firehouse that the 10-10 house is being set up as a triage station. This way, if they run in to any civilians out on the street, they can direct them this way. We can at least triage them real quick and then, you know, once they start rolling ambulances and stuff, we can start getting people taken care of."

So they started letting everybody out on the street know that the 10-10 house was going to be set up as triage, and we -- and shortly thereafter, there were a couple of firefighters that came into the station,

BRIAM SMITH

and they said that there was a brother that was hurt out on the street pretty bad. He had been hit in the head with a piece of falling debris, and that he was -- you know, that he was in bad shape, and they -- initially the guys weren't -- like, I guess, word of mouth was just getting around, and they didn't know where he was, so that the captain was like, all right, let's figure out where we are going to send you guys, and once they -- once we had a general vicinity, they just kept pointing down Liberty, like down in this direction.

Q. To the west?

A. Yeah, to the west. That captain said, "All right, you know --" again, we were just trying to get a sense of where it was. So I grabbed two firefighters. There was a Stokes basket laying on the ground. I said, "Guys, grab the Stokes. Come with me."

I grabbed my tech bag, told my partner that I was going out to go get this guy and initially, like my partner, he got kind of frantic. He was like, you know, I'm not leaving you, I'm not leaving you, but I said, "You know, just sit tight. I got to go out, and I got to see if there is somebody out there. I'm going to bring him right back in. Don't worry about it."

BRIAM SMITH

I'll be all right."

So I went out and I started heading down west on Liberty, and again, like I said to this point, I don't know anything as far as, you know, plane or anything else.

Q. Did you ever try communicating to CB that you were doing this at the 10-10?

A. Yeah, yeah, central dispatcher, yeah.

Q. You notified them?

A. Sure, sure. I let them know pretty much every step of the way.

Q. Okay.

A. I called them up, and, I mean, I didn't tell them that I was going on the street, but I told them, you know, I told my partner that I was heading out and, you know, I let them know we were setting up the triage station at the 10-10 house.

So we -- I started heading down West on Liberty with two firefighters, and again people were -- people were still, you know, leaping out of the building 20 feet away, whatever it was, and they were -- you know, you had to walk like this, because they were landing so close, and there was still a lot of stuff falling from the building. There was a lot of



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debris on the street, but, again, like the whole point I don't really see any -- there is not a big wing or anything hanging out. For all I know, someone, you know, hid a bomb on the 80th Floor, blew it up, and, you know, I'm just seeing the remnants of everything that's going on. We don't have any specifics.

Q. You don't have to follow that. Just keep going.

A. Okay. So we started heading down trying to find this guy, and, again, like I said, there was firefighters all over the street, there were guys everywhere, and the first indication that I had that it was a plane crash, I remember -- because I'm color blind so it's hard for me to distinguish different colors, especially when everything is gray, because it had -- really had kind of a gray look to it, because of all the dust, you know, but there was like a bank or something here, and there's like a fountain, I guess, right in front of the bank.

I'm trying to remember everything in that 20 seconds I'm going past it, but I remember there was life jackets everywhere, the yellow in-flight life jackets, and that the contrast of the yellow against all the gray, you know. It stood out. It was easy for

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me to pick it out, and I remember thinking as I saw that, you know, I guess it must have been a plane crash, because where the hell else would you get a bunch of yellow life jackets in the middle of Manhattan, you know.

So, yeah, and I looked on the ground to see if there was anything around, and I didn't see anything, so I thought, you know, maybe it was an empty plane, who knows, but we started going a little further down. Like I said, it was a long walk before we started getting to where this guy was. I've been down there since, because I went down there on one of the family trips the Fire Department had, and I tried, you know -- they got that platform up there?

Q. Yes.

A. I tried to see from there to where the 10-10 house is, and I'm trying to figure out how far down I went, because, like I said, I tried --

Q. Did you go into the Westside Highway?

A. No, no, no.

Q. That's a big multiple highway, so --

A. Okay. No, no, no. I definitely never left Liberty Street. I just don't know how far.

Q. You went down a block or two maybe.

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A. I went down maybe a couple of blocks, and I remember that you have to kind of cut back a little bit. You have to cut back a little bit, and because there was a lieutenant on the street. I asked him where this guy was, and he said that, "He's, you know, down that way away, but, you know, stay under the awnings. There's a lot of stuff coming down."

And then I started walking, and I slipped, and I looked to see what I slipped on, and it was this guy's head. It was like a mush head, you know. It wasn't solid like a head, you know. I guess it was from the explosion or whatever. It was like a mush head. I could still see it was someone's head, and at that point, I took -- I tried to take note at what basically was on the ground around me, and then that's -- there was a lot of body parts there at that point. I mean, it was -- I mean, it literally carpeted the sidewalk. You couldn't tip toe through it like a mine field or nothing like that. You couldn't, like, you know, like you are dodging dog crap or something. I mean, it was -- basically just it was everywhere, you know, and I remember I -- again, I took a couple of seconds to take notice of what exactly it was I was looking at, and some of it you could tell what it was

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you know, some of it was identifiable and some of it, you knew it was from a person. You didn't know what the heck it was. I mean, I seen a lot of dead in MVAs, dismemberments and stuff, but some of it was just, you know, I just had no idea. I mean, just from the explosion and from the fall and everything else, it kind of, you know, turns people to mush.

I don't know if you -- you need to know about the details of the bodies and stuff right?

Q. So did you ever get to the firefighter that was hurt or not?

A. When I started get to go that stuff, I saw down where the guy was. They pointed down to him maybe a hundred feet away. He was -- four firefighters picked him up on a long board. I mean, you could see his head. His head was, you know, was in bad shape. I don't know if this guy lived or whatever, but from where I was standing, from my perspective it didn't look too good for him, but he started running down the other way. He was heading down towards the Westside Highway on Liberty.

So at that point I said to these two guys -- I said, "Listen, I don't know where he's going, if they have something set up down there, but let's get the

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hell back inside the firehouse." I said, "There's just too much shit falling down. We are going to get -- we don't want to get killed out here."

So we started making our way back to Liberty, back to the 10-10 house down Liberty. We stopped at this corner because there were two concession stands. You know, the little carts that got the donuts and stuff in it, coffee trucks?

There were two there, and I said to these guys, I said, "Hey, listen. I want to get out all the liquid stuff, all the water, the juice, ice tea and all that. I want to set up a rehab station inside the firehouse also, and this way we will have it set up for the firefighters that are going to be working there."

I mine, when I was setting up this thing in the 10-10 house, I was expecting to be there like for 24 hours. I was anticipating setting something up for a long-term operation, and, you know, I certainly had no idea that all those plans would be spoiled shortly thereafter, but -- and the thing is, like, with city firemen, these guys are funny, because it's like they have, like, two main things, you know. One thing is they just love to get like an order, like, you know, they just need like someone to tell them do this, do

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that, and so after I said this, they -- like one of the other favorite things they love to do is break stuff, and they -- both these guys put their hands on the cart, and they are, like, let's knock it over.

I said "Hey, guys, whoa. There's enough stuff destroyed out here." There was a lock about that big on it, you know. Don't you have bolt cutters or something in the firehouse? They were, like, yeah. I said, "Let's go get the bolt cutters," I said. You know, I don't want to break anything more than is already broken out here. Let's, you know, let's just, you know, relax, try to be a little calm about this.

So we went back in the firehouse, saw my partner. You know, he said, "You know, how bad is it? Is it bad out there?" I said, "Yeah,, it's pretty bad." From the time that I saw the first jumper to that point, there was like six, seven jumpers, plus all the stuff.

Q. Your partner's name?

A. Brian Gordon. You want his shield?

Q. Yeah.

A. Shield No. 5548. I know what it is, but --

Q. We just got a name to clarify that.

A. Brian Gordon.

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So these guys grabbed the bolt cutters, and we ran back out to the concession stand, and it was the concession stand on the west side of Greenwich, I guess. It was right here. Like this is where the 10-10 house is, because it was on -- there was like a street, because the 10-10 house is, like, on the corner, whatever it is, so I went back out there, cut the lock off the cart, opened up the door, and there was some milk crates in with butter and milk and stuff, and I threw out the milk and the butter, and filled it up with ice teas, Snapples and waters and stuff, gave it to the one guy that was with me and I said, "You know, take this into the firehouse. Put it against the wall. I'll set it up when I get in there."

So that guy split, and I started doing the other one, the same thing, emptied it out, and started putting some stuff in there, and I heard this sound, and, you know, it wasn't until -- it wasn't until I saw the news, it wasn't until I'm able to replay events and where I was and what exactly was happening, because, like I said, as far as I know, there is only one plane that's hit at this point. I mean, it sounded like a plane coming in. It sounded like a jet engine getting ready to land on my head, you know, and I remember I

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started to hear it.

I looked at the guy, and I said, you know, like, run, and we started hauling, and we started running down towards the 10-10 house. There was guys all over the street, all these guys. These guys were history, because --

Q. Civilians you are talking about?

A. No, firefighters. There weren't all that many civilians. I mean, they were out there, but when we started running into the 10-10 house, I mean, from the time that I hear that first sound, to the time that the eventual concussion hits me, it couldn't have been more than four seconds, but, like, as I go through this, it's like slow motion, you know, like everything got slowed down.

And so we started running, and the firefighter was ahead of me. I don't know if he was from Engine 10 or Ladder 10. He was from one of the 10 companies, because he had it on his helmet, and when we -- by the time we got into the engine bays, they were completely clear. There was nobody in there. They all ran to the back of the building, like the kitchen area in there.

The only guy that was still in there was the



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Oriental guy Fu, because he couldn't get up and walk, and this poor bastard was crawling his way to the back of the building, like an animal that gets his hind quarters run over, you know. It was horrible, and I remember the firefighter was running, and he ran past him, and I remember I thought to myself -- I said, oh, man, you know, now I'm going to have to stop and try to grab this guy, and as the sound is coming, getting louder and louder, you know, it really feels like it's about to fly in the front door of the of the fire house.

Q. Talking about the second plane crashing?

A. Not the second plane crashing. This is the building coming down.

Q. Okay.

A. To me, it's the second plane crashing.

That's what it sounds like.

Q. That is why I wanted to clarify that.

A. Yeah. Again, like I said, I only know this because at the time I'm watching on the news and everything, afterwards. From where I was, you couldn't (inaudible) so we started running.

I stopped. I picked up Fu. I grabbed him by the KED that we had on his waist and his hip, grabbed

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his shirt, and I started to drag him and looked behind me, and then it was just like "bam," and it came so fast. It was like a bomb went off, you know, and it just hit me so suddenly, you know, and it picked me up, picked me right up off my feet and threw me a good 30 feet through the air, because now you can imagine where the ambulance is. I'm on the other end of the bay side. Ain't nothing blocking the -- you know, between the street and me, and it just hit me and sent me flying and sent me closer to where the gear racks were. They moved them since, because I've been down there, but the gear racks were set up on the left-hand side behind where I set up all the chairs.

It sent me past that part, and I got to the back of the gear racks and hit down face first, and then I felt the rush of everything coming behind me. I felt things coming by, hitting me, and it was just a sound, like whoosh, and I liken it to being hit by a wave on the beach, you know, because that's kind of what it felt like. I mean, the stuff was so heavy I thought I was being buried.

I thought I was going to -- it felt like people were just dumping, you know, dirt like it was shooting at me, you know. It was so thick and heavy,

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and at that instant, I really felt like I was going to be buried, like that's how I was going to meet it, you know, and I took a breath, and then the blast came, and then there was -- you know, like I said, that wave of crap and everything else that hit us, and then I opened my eyes, and I couldn't see anything. It was just black. I mean, black as you can imagine. I mean, you can't close your eyes and get that black.

And I stood up, and I thought to myself I have to -- I said I can't take another breath. You know, the next breath is it, you know, and it was just, like, kind of like a quick silence right after it happened, and I'm a volunteer firefighter out on the Island for seven years, and, you know, like, firefighters stuff started kicking in, and I thought to myself I got to get a Scott pack, you know, I got to get one, because I can't breathe. If I breathe, I'm going to die. I had one breath. I could hold it for you know, a good 30 seconds or so, and I got to find air.

First thing I thought was, okay, I'm going to go out to my unit, because I work for a Haz-Tac unit. It has two packs on it. I run out to grab a pack, and I said, oh, I'm on an extra unit. So I'm in a

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firehouse. There's fire trucks here, and at that instant, I pulled my shirt up over my face, and I got ready to take my next breath, and I remember as I was doing it I thought to myself, you know, this is going to be the last one, you know.

So I was breathing in, and my entire inside of my mouth, my nose, my throat, anything that was wet inside down the whole way down was instantly dirt, you know, like I was hacking and coughing, and it was horrible.

So I tried to make my way towards where the back of the firehouse was. People at this point started screaming. People were trying to push past each other. You couldn't see anything, but you could feel people, like, grabbing on to you and trying to push you out of the way, and I found there was -- I think it was a Port Authority cop. He had a white shirt on. He had a white shirt on, and he looked like he was walking with a purpose, so I figured I think I'll follow this guy, because I was -- you know, kept saying, "Does anybody know where the exit is to this building?" Because I thought maybe all that crap was just in the firehouse. Little did I know that the back of the building is blown out, and the street is right

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behind it, and, you know, it's just as dark out there, but, I mean, when you can't see your hand in front of your face, you don't know what's going on, you know, and, you know, just survival stuff is kicking in, you know, and I remember I followed this guy into like a corner of the kitchen, and he turned around, and, I'm like, what are you doing? He said, "I don't know. I'm trying to find a way out."

You know, I -- I remember thinking a lot of things, you know, and I thought to myself, my hopes got kind of dashed. I thought maybe I was, you know, heading, you know, to a final way out, and I pictured it was like -- I felt like I was on the Discovery Channel, you know and they show stuff, like, the concentration camps [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

That was when I was picturing. The people are screaming, and there's complete chaos. You can't see anything. You can't breathe, and I didn't know how

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many more -- I mean, I know I couldn't keep breathing this crap, but eventually it starts to calm down a little bit.

My partner was -- I heard my partner screaming my name, and I grabbed him, and he was just -- you know, he was beside himself. He was pretty upset. I said, "It's all right, Brian." I said, you know, "We are here, let's try to figure out what's going on. Let's try to relax a little bit," and actually he said -- we got separated again, because he went out towards the engine bay again, and I'm in the kitchen, and I tried walking back out to the engine base, and I heard on my radio, because I think we already switched to Brooklyn North again, because initially we were on citywide. You couldn't get on the Citywide frequency to your save your life, so congested going over the bridge. It was nuts.

So I remember hearing him screaming on the radio, you know, 31 Mary, 31 Mary, just, you know, yelling a Mayday, saying that we were trapped in a building, you know, that it was -- you know, there was rubble. We couldn't breathe. We were injured. We took heavy casualties. You know, that basically we were taking a pretty solid beating, and then when I saw

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him again, I was getting ready to radio. He said, "I already called them." I said, "Yeah, I know." I said, "You can't give these guys a message like that." I said, you know, "We will have to figure out what we can figure out here, but, you know, you're screaming like that, somebody else is going to come running in here trying to get us out, and they are going to get killed out there, too. Let's just let everybody try to figure out where they're at right now. Let's take it, you know -- try to think this through."

So I pretty much relayed the same message, but in a -- you know, in a much calmer fashion, you know, for the sake of everybody else that was out there, and there were people that were screaming. Like I said, the dust was starting to settle a bit. You could see. I mean, not all that well, but there were a lot of people that got hurt, that got broken legs, and a firefighter that just -- he got a tibia fracture.

A lot of people (inaudible.) So I grabbed my partner, and I walked to -- you know, we were in, like, the engine bay area, and I said to him, "Brian, listen, before we do anything else, we got to kind of figure out whatever -- I need to know where you are at, we are on the same page here, you know."

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I said to him -- I said, "Basically this point we have two options. Option No. 1 is there will be -- salvage whatever we can out of the ambulance, because at this point it was in bad shape, but I mean, there was still some stuff that could have been taken out, so we can salvage it, pick our way through the rubble, try and find our way out of here and just run to Brooklyn and don't stop until we hit the water, maybe swim back to the battalion. Whatever it takes, we got to get the hell out of here.

I remember it was pretty funny, because I remember he looked at me, and he said to me -- he says, "There is only one option. We are getting the hell out of here. I'm not dying with these people here." He's, like, we are going to get killed. I said, "Well, let's -- let me just go through Option No. 2 before I make a decision."

Option No. 2 is that we stay, that we treat every patient that we have, because there is no EMS. There is nobody here. I said, "You know, if there is anybody that was out in the street, those guys got wiped out." I said, "There is nobody else here to help them." I said, "I can't, you know, in good conscience leave these people." I said, "I'm staying, and, you



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know --" I said, "I can't leave anybody behind," and he said, "All right, I'm with you," and he's like, I'm not leaving your side.

I said, "All right. Now that we have a plan, let's go implement it." We went inside, and we splinted the guy's leg. We got him -- he was on an long board. Like I said, things started to settle a little bit. There were firefighters inside and outside the firehouse.

I went into the kitchen area where there were civilians, everybody kind of congregating and did like a -- you know, everyone had three seconds to do their thing. I said, "I don't want to hear your history. I don't want to hear what kind of medicine you are taking. What hurts? You know. My arm is cut. What hurts?" You know, and I went through the whole thing, 20 people, 30 people, whatever it was.

So at that point, we started to assign people to pick people up that couldn't walk, pass them out the window, assign people that, you know -- that couldn't walk, but, you know, without help, but could basically kind of carry some of their own weight. Okay, listen, you two guys help him, and let's go out the back door, start walking down the street. Walking wounded were

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getting -- I mean, everybody was making their way out.

Fu was still in there. He was out by the back exit. I remember because I went upstairs to check to see if there was anybody up there. I went past him, and he was pretty worried that we were going to leave him, but I assured him that we weren't going to.

So we went to -- we went upstairs. There were a couple of more people up there, got them out of the building, and we basically -- we emptied out pretty much the whole building. I mean, there were still some scattered guys there, firefighters and stuff, and one of them, Gordon says, he is one of the captains. I didn't make the recognition. He was wearing turnout gear, so I didn't really get to see who it was, but this guy Gordon and myself walked back out to the engine bay area, because, like I said, there was a lot of debris out there.

I didn't know if people were buried. I said okay, before we leave the house, let's get a shot out here. Is there anybody out here? We're screaming, and just waiting and listening, you know, to hear if anybody responds, and nobody responded, so I said, "All right. There's nobody to dig out here." I said, "Let's get the hell out of here," you know and that's

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when the -- we started to hear the sound of the next tower coming down, and again, it sounded like a plane.

When we were in that house, and we started hearing it coming down, I thought that this plane -- I'm thinking the third plane is hitting, you know. Little do I know that the first plane already hit, and the second plane hit, and the tower came down, and I think the towers are still up, and I remember consciously thinking there is no way that this tower came down, because when I was out there before, and I looked up, I mean, I thought to myself, all right, the collapse zone on the structure fire is one and a half times the height of the building, which puts me somewhere back to Brooklyn. I said, "That thing comes down, we are all dead. You know, nobody could live through that. You know, it's crazy."

So like I said, after that, you know, what I think is the second plane, but was really actually the tower coming down. I mean, there is no way in the world for me that I'm thinking that this thing went down because of the damage I figure it would cause, so I think it's a plane, and again, when the Tower 1 comes down it sounds just like a plane, and it was so loud. You know, the energy of all the steel and the concrete

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and everything else giving way, and I guess the rush of air.

We started running, and we ran into the bathroom just behind the apparatus bay, so we started heading to the back of the house on the left-hand side, and the three of us ran in there, and we got in the corner on the floor, and the three of us were praying. I had the firefighter on my left and my partner behind me, and we were just kind of like huddled on the ground real low, and then it hit, and, you know, we kind of got, like, pushed into the wall, and the same thing with the smoke and the dust and everything else.

You couldn't see. You couldn't breathe, and it lasted awhile, you know, and eventually it starts again. It starts -- the blast part of it is over, and, you know, like things are starting to settle down a little bit. You can hear there's a lot of noise outside, stuff falling, stuff falling apart, whatever it was, and I remember I was laying there on the floor, and I heard water running. I thought it was weird. I thought, you know, we were in the bathroom. I thought someone was taking a leak, you know, and I said, "What the hell is that?" I said -- you know, and the two -- the other two guys, I mean, they were -- they were

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shaking. They were really upset, and they were crying, and I said, "Hey, is someone taking a leak in here or what?" And these guys, they were laughing. What are you talking about?

I said, "Listen, I hear water running," and I got up, and there was a sink above my head, and it was weird, like I think about it now, but I leaned forward, and I turned the faucet off and the water stopped, and I said -- I remember, I talked to the guy (inaudible) hey, guys, listen, you know for whatever reason, we were spared here. We still got work to do. Let's go.

And we got up, and we just got back into the mode again and just started getting up and running to do our next thing, you know.

So we went to -- we got up. We started -- again, we made another sweep of the firehouse. Nobody was left in there. Went to the back of the building. Fu was on the ground, and there was a couple of firefighters outside, and then they are, like, looking at us, you know, you're EMS, and they were, like, can we pick him up. We need a back board, you know. I said "You guys are worried about immobilization? You're crazy. Let's just pick this guy up and get him the hell out of here." I said, "What are you worried

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about? You going to make him a paraplegic? He's going to be buried in here. You guys got to be kidding me."

So we picked him up, and we tried doing like a soldier carry with our arms on each shoulder, and it just wasn't working out, because he wouldn't let go of his briefcase, and he was whacking us in the face with it, and no matter how much we tried to make him let go of it, he wouldn't let go, you know, and we come to find out the guy has like half a million dollars in cash in his briefcase, you know, and really it was a lot --

Q. It was one million cash.

A. It was like the mafia movies. You flip the briefcase up and you see all the hundreds stacked in there. I was, like, holy cow, you know, he wasn't -- he would not let go. Because we offered. We said, "Look, we'll carry it if you want us to." He would not let go, so eventually we were, like, what the hell are we going to do with this guy?

So we just picked him up and carried him on our shoulders, like legs over here, arms over here and basically just took turns trying to carry him.

Now, we come out, I guess from this map because the bag of the firehouse is blown out. I guess

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this is Cedar here, so we come out onto Cedar, and we tried going back and forth, and everybody out there is telling us that all these intersections are blocked off with debris, you can't get through, but eventually we make it out to -- I can't figure.

Q. Thames.

A. To Thames, I guess, because we start heading in the direction of Rector.

Q. Thames.

A. So eventually we get down that way. I don't know if we make our way back to Greenwich or to Trinity, get down in that direction. To be honest with you, I got very turned around, 1983 -- wherever 10 Rector is -- you know.

Q. You know, that is not really important. You made your way down.

A. In that general vicinity. We get down there, and we carried Fu down that way, and we get into this building, and I remember the reason why we stopped in there was because there was clean air. I mean, there was so much garbage and debris on the street, you can't see a damn thing, and our eyes were burning, and I said, "You know, we're going to get killed out here walking through that crap," and it wasn't like you

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looked up and said, oh, you know, the towers are gone. You couldn't see two feet in front of you, you know, above, below, whatever it was. You couldn't see your hands in front of your face.

So, we stopped at this building because a guy at the door, he opened the door, and I remember looking inside, and there was clean air in there, and I said, "We got to get in there," and I said to the guy, "How many stories in this building?" He said "27 stories."

I didn't know whatever became of Fu, but he's like the comic relief in this story, but anyway -- so we make our way down to Rector Street. We get in there and, again, like I said, I mean, it was kind of like a toss-up. Do I go in this big building or stay out on the street? And I was like, I get to get some air. I can't even see anymore. My eyes felt like Mace, you know.

So we went inside, and there was a security desk right in the middle of the lobby. It was a big lobby, you know, and we went in there. We put Fu down, and there were people in there, you know, like maybe 20, 30 people, and, you know, I said to the guys at the security desk -- I said, "You know, are there still people in this building?" The guy's like, there's



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hundreds of people in this building. We told them to stay at their desks, and I said, "Jesus Christ. We got to get these people out of here, you know. They -- these people are going to get killed. You know, I said, "We got to get the hell out of Manhattan." I said, "We got to try to get as many people out as we can," so I radioed out to dispatch.

I told them the address we were at, and I said, "Central, this is 31 Mary. You know, my partner and I made it into this location. I need directions to send these people out to give them -- you know just tell them which way to go, you know, and I need directions as precise as -- I'm in this building. I'm walking out the front door. Do I make a right or a left?"

I said, "Central, I can't see street names. I can't see signs. I can't see anything." I said I need rights and lefts, you know, and they said, "10-4 one Mary. We'll call you back with directions." I said "Okay." So --

Q. Did they ever do that?

A. Yeah, they did.

Q. Okay.

A. And yeah, it was a Brooklyn North

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dispatcher. The craziness of everything, I don't know, you know, who it was, but people were coming up to me and saying, you know, are you all right? Are you hurt? I'm, like, yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry. Like, no, you're bleeding real bad, and I had on a paper mask, and I pulled it away it was full of blood, you know, and I thought that I broke my nose, because there was blood coming from my nose, blood coming from my face. I was cut up, and I said, "I can't feel it, you know, so whatever it is isn't enough to worry about. You know, we'll deal with it later on. At this point I mean, this whole time is just --" is all adrenaline, so we were in the building, and we started making announcements over the PA system.

My partner goes into the stairwell. He goes upstairs, and my partner went upstairs, starting clearing out some of the floors. I was downstairs trying to get a handle on things, and eventually the central dispatch called me, Brooklyn dispatch calls me with the directions, and I was with that volunteer firefighter from Commack, this guy Rob.

Like I said, he worked in the trade center and he was familiar with the area. I said to him -- I said, "Rob, do you understand what this is? What she's

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telling me? Because I don't know what the hell she is telling me." You know, I mean I know make a right, but she was giving me street names, you know, and I said, "Rob I don't know what the hell she's talking about."

He said, "I know exactly where she is sending us. I know exactly where I am, you know, no sweat. You know, I can handle it." I'm, like, all right, great.

So I cleared all this crap off the desk. There was maybe like a hundred people in the lobby at this point, and I got up -- like I was, you know, like a public speaker in ancient Greece or something, and I said, "All right, folks. Everyone has to pay attention. You have to pay attention to what I'm saying explicitly. Nobody -- if anybody doesn't want to listen or want do their own thing, be my guest."

I said, "You know, your blood is in your own hands at that point." I said, "If you want to go home and see your families, I have directions. I will get you to your family."

Meanwhile a lot of it was, you know, was BS, because I don't know what happened to some of these people. I don't know if they know exactly what's going on. I'm sending these people to their deaths or

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anything, but they don't know -- you know, these people were just looking for a voice to tell them which way to run, you know.

So basically I said to -- you know, I got -- listen, we're going to be walking out of here. We're going to be walking out of here single file. Stay arm's length away from the person in front of you, because if you do anything more than that, you are going to lose sight of them and get lost out there.

There is not going to be any running. There is not going to be any cutting, no pushing, no shoving,. Basically if we start doing this, people are going to get hurt. If you are walking out of here and you think you know a better way than what my dispatcher is telling me, and you want to make a left when everyone else is making a right, you are going to get hit by a plane, a building is going to fall on you, some debris is going to fall on you, trip on some crap out there. You are going to get hurt. I said, "I promise you, no one is coming to get you for a long time, because I just came from that direction, and there ain't nobody left over there, so you have to listen to what I say to the letter" and I could hear a pin drop. You know, a hundred people in the lobby, but

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the echoes when people talk, and nobody said a word, you know, and I was going through the whole thing, keep a mask on your face, breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth, try to squint, everything to try to, you know, instill in these people that I kind of knew what I was talking about.

People were, like, who do we follow? I don't know (inaudible) because initially I pointed to the guy Rob. I said, "You follow one person and one person alone, and that's the person in front of you. You don't stop following until you get to the water."

I spoke with this guy Rob afterwards, and he said to me -- he said, "You know, Brian, when we got down to the water," he said, "Its' funny, because as I was walking, I felt like the Pied Piper, you know, because we'd pick up some stragglers along the way, and I'd be, like, get in line with everybody else.

Just, you know get in line with everybody else, and he said that once he started getting to a spot in Manhattan where it started to clear out a little bit, he said, you know, behind him was -- like, I mean you could run a laser beam down it, a straight line. These people followed it right to the letter, you know, and they all got out of the building, and my

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partner, you know, he was like -- are we going with them? And I'm, like, you know, we can't leave yet, there is still more people in the building, and we still had Fu.

I mean, I don't know what the hell to do with this guy. I said, "I can't carry this guy back to Brooklyn, you know."

So we did the same thing again. This time I went up on the floors. We cleared out the rest of the people in the building. Some of the people were hesitant. They were, like, we were told to stay at the desk. I said, "Listen, if you want to stay by your desk and get killed in here, it's your business."

I said, "You want to go home to your family" I said, "I got -- you know, I can give you the way." And nobody stayed behind their desk, you know. Everybody left.

So we went to -- down the lobby. Same thing again. Filled up the lobby, a hundred people, 150 people. It was a bigger crowd than the first time around. Gave the same speech again, and we didn't have any paper masks to give anybody. I know Gordon started -- he had the button-down uniform. Started taking it off and cutting it into strips so people could put it

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over their face, and like I said, again, the same speech.

There was an off-duty police officer there, and he approached me and said -- I gave him the same directions. He knew exactly where I was talking about, and so --

Q. So you were going and making your way down to the ferry, right?

A. No, I never left the building.

Q. You were sending the people in the direction of the ferry?

A. I guess. Like I said, I don't know where the hell central sent them, but the people who were familiar with the area, who were the leaders of this group, they knew where they were going.

All I knew was they made it right out of the building. After that I couldn't see them any more, you know.

I have to stop for a drink of water. My throat is getting a little dry.

So anyway, we evacuated the building again. At this point, there's nobody left in the building. Fu was still in there, myself and Gordon. There was another guy, older guy, and his foot was mangled. He

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couldn't walk on it, and he said to me his name was Cribby or Crippy, or something like that. I mean, I don't know if he was making a joke because he was, like, being crippled or whatever it was, but I know that when this group of people had left, my partner was, like, you know, are we leaving with this group? And I'm like, listen, we could try to manage to carry Fu the hell out of here, but this other guy's got to weight 250 pounds. I'm not made with that kind of strength. I said, "I can't carry that guy." We have to wait until eventually vehicles start coming in, because this whole area -- and like I said, I don't know where the hell I am in -- you know, in relation to the trade center, and all I know is I can't see a damn thing.

I mean, it's not black outside, but it's dark as hell. You can't see anything, and I said eventually a vehicle is going to start coming down this way, and when one does we will try to flag him down and, you know, throw a patient in there.

So we waited there for awhile, and I know that the whole time that we were in that building I was scared, because I thought that -- you could hear planes and stuff around flying outside. I mean, eventually,



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like I said, once I get out to -- once I get into the hospital I realized that they're the fighter jets, but, you know, I don't know what the hell is flying around. Like I said, I can't see anything.

To me, every time one of the buildings fell down, it was a plane coming in, and then I saw -- I'm thinking to myself, you know, how many -- LaGuardia and Kennedy. I mean, there's got to be dozens of planes out there. I'm waiting for the next one to come in any second now, you know, and I know that my impulse was just to run like hell, and I wanted to get out of Manhattan in the worst way, and we were listening to -- they had a clock radio in the -- by the security deck, and we were trying to listen to it. It was very staticky, but we could hear reports of there were -- planes were hitting Manhattan, that they were going -- that they hit Pittsburgh, that they were trying to do something to Chicago, that they attempted something at Camp David, that they hit the Pentagon, and I'm thinking Jesus Christ, how many -- there's going to be a million planes up there. We are under a full-scale attack, you know, and, like I said, I wanted to get, I mean, I want to go back out to Long Island, way out east where I live.

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I don't want to be anywhere near the city. I want to get the hell out of here, you know, but we stayed there, you know, because, like I said, you know right from the 10-10 house. I mean, I could have walked away, but, you know, I don't think I could have, you know, lived with myself if I walked away from people that, you know, are going to be stuck in there.

It's nice to be able to walk away. These people didn't have that luxury, so we waited in there for awhile, and eventually I could start to hear emergency vehicles outside, and I went to -- I went outside to see if could flag down. Eventually I flagged down an RMP and, you know, just a regular -- regular precinct, you know, regular police unit, and I said to him -- I said, "Listen, I got two patients inside that can't walk, and need to go to a hospital, you know. They're hurt pretty bad, and, you know, they -- would you guys be able to take them out of here?"

And they were like, yeah, all right, so we went inside. We carried the two of them out to the car, threw them in the back seat of the car, and I remember they were -- Fu was like, you know, I never forget you, I never forget you. I said, "I know, Fu. Get in the car. Get to the hospital." And whatever

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hospital they went to, I mean, I don't know. I told them go to any kind of hospital.

So they sent those guys on their way, and at that point, I said to my partner -- I said, "Listen, there's nobody left. You know, there is nobody left to treat, or to carry or to save or anything else." I said, "Let's start going home, and let's do what we can to get back to Brooklyn."

At that point, we started walking down. Like I said, when we started taping again, down towards Wall Street. I remember because as we were walking down, Gordon and myself, we reached the bull. That's where we meet up again with Murray.

We were with him in the 10-10 house, but we got separated when we left, and we eventually -- like I said, we meet up with him again, and as we start heading down towards Wall Street, and we walked down there, and his vehicle was parked somewhere around there. I mean, I don't know where the hell it was parked, but I know it was definitely in the line of fire, because his vehicle took a beating.

He was, like, listen, my car is not too far from here. I'm going to run down and get it. You know, because my partner -- he had a sprained ankle.

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He couldn't walk all that well, and, like I said, I'm starting to feeling the pain now. I could feel the back of my neck was all swollen. My head was splitting, you know, a real back headache. I was bleeding, you know, I was sore, and the adrenaline and everything else was starting to wear off.

I mean, I don't know what time of the morning it is at this point, but, I mean, I hadn't had anything to eat since dinner, three o'clock in the morning, the tour before, you know.

So we went to -- so this guy is, like, I'm going to be gone. Hang out here, I'll be back to you guys and see if I can get as far as the vehicle and see what we could do to drive out of here. He left, and my partner and I were waiting down in the street for a while.

Eventually Murray came back. He got us into his car. I had to sit on my helmet, because of all the glass from the windows were blown in, and the car was full of debris. There was so much dust on the street you couldn't see anything. In fact, I gave him my sunglasses so he could see while he was driving, but the windshield was gone, and he -- we started driving, and I don't know where the hell he was driving us, and

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I said to him -- I said, "Listen, all we want to do is get back the Brooklyn, because all I want to do is get in my vehicle back at Battalion 31 and just drive --" I knew we had to go to the hospital. I told him let me drive out to Long Island. You know, a Long Island Hospital, because I'm imagining like these war stories, you know, like, being on the stretcher in the hallway in some hospital with the lights flickering on and off, and I'm looking like this, and, again, like I said, we're expecting the next wave of assaults coming in. I'm, like, the last thing I want to do is be in -- I don't want to be anywhere near the city. I want to get the hell out of here, and so we started driving down -- started driving down Wall Street, and we made a stop at 100 Wall Street. I remember the address because we saw a conditions truck, and I remember stopping, and I said, you know, let's -- you know, maybe it's a Brooklyn boss. You know, if it is, we'll hook up with this guy, because he's, like, let's go back to Battalion 4, and, you know, we'll go to the hospital. You guys get checked out.

I said, "Listen, I don't want to go anywhere in Brooklyn. I mean, in Manhattan." I said, "I want to get back to Brooklyn." Whatever it takes. I don't

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know care if I got to walk over the bridge and carry Gordon the whole way. I said, "I got to get the hell out of here."

So we went to see where this guy was a boss out of, and we got out, the three of us. We walked into the building 100 Wall Street, and, like I said, it was dusty as hell. There were emergency vehicles going this way and that, and the lieutenant comes out. Hey, how you doing, lieutenant, you know, we're a Brooklyn unit. We are trying to see what we can do to try to get back to Brooklyn, and ended up this guy was -- he was a [REDACTED].

The guy was an idiot. I mean, I don't know what his name is, but this guy was -- I'd really like to meet him, because I'd really like to know where the hell his head was, because, I mean, if you could imagine, I mean, my partner and I, we got our asses kicked in a really serious way, you know, and I'm bleeding, and we're covered with dust, and my partner can't even walk, and he sees the two of us come strolling up on the building, the three of us, and he says, "Oh, good. I'm glad you guys are here. I have a patient inside, and I need you guys to hang out with her, you know. I got a few other calls I got to run

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to."

What's wrong with the patient, you know? He says, "Well, she's -- she fainted and she's feeling a little weak, a little dizzy, a little nauseous, and, you know, just the excitement of everything has got her a little frightened, and she's a little lightheaded."

I said, "What, are you kidding me?" You know, and the guy is, like, don't worry about it. I called an ambulance. They should be here in a couple of minutes. Just hang out with her for a little while, and I said, "All right."

You know, this guy gets in his truck and leaves us there, you know, and I remember there was -- you know, we must have looked like the two biggest jerks in the whole city, because here we are -- I mean, beat to hell, and I'm literally laying in the floor of this lobby. This woman is on a chair with -- he didn't even leave his oxygen.

I said, "Can you leave your oxygen?" No, I need that for my calls. Here, here is some information about her vital signs and stuff. I said, "We don't have any equipment. We got nothing. Technically we are off line. They have us off line, because we are injured."

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And he said, "Don't worry about it. Just kind of hang out with her and keep an eye on things."

Murray was pissed off, who the hell is this guy, because the two jerk lieutenants -- I mean the two jerk EMTs are sitting on the ground like this. We couldn't even stand any more, and we were like, do you have any allergies to medicine, going through, like, I'm going to treat this woman. Like, we couldn't do anything if anything ever happened anyway.

Stupidest thing. I mean, again, like, we were living through it, you know, I mean, it didn't seem -- I mean, it bothered me. I said, like, "All right, you know, whatever."

Now, this guy is a jerk, but we were there for over an hour waiting for an ambulance, and I remember thinking to myself, what the hell is this guy kidding me? If an ambulance actually did get dispatched, could you imagine an ambulance getting a call for a syncopal episode and dizziness at 100 Wall Street. Who the hell knows what's going on down by the trade center, what other kind of crap is coming in.

This is a joke, and what are you guys kidding me? And eventually this knucklehead comes back, and I mean, I don't know what, you know, whether any of this



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gets archived or anything else --

Q. Don't worry about it.

A. You know, the guy was an idiot, you know. I don't -- I'm not out to get anybody in trouble. Maybe the guy just couldn't think straight either, because it was hectic, so give him the benefit of the doubt, but he came back, and he said, "You guys are still here? The ambulance didn't come yet?" What are you an idiot? Murray was saying the whole -- he was mad as hell trying to -- he was, like, get up, see if you can find when this guy is coming back. When is the ambulance coming, and we kept calling, and we didn't get shit, and we -- you guys -- like I'm going to flag down somebody. I'm going to get you guys out of here, and he eventually gets a police van, whatever it was. It was a van of some sort, and the guy -- I mean he said to me -- he was, like, all right, listen, we are going to take her to Beekman. I want the two of you guys to go with her. You got to escort her to Beekman.

I said, "What, are you kidding? What the hell is Beekman?" He said, "It's a hospital in Manhattan." I said, "Listen pal," I said, "wrong borough." I said, "I'm going to Brooklyn." I said, "I stopped here to see if we could help you out."

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He said, "Well, like, as long as you guys make sure you get to an emergency room. You guys are hurt really bad." I said, "Yeah, no kidding." So we -- and I remember that Murray was kind of -- he was trying to convince us, too, to go to a hospital, go to Battalion 4, and maybe we could hook up with a ride from there, but, like I said, I was -- like I told him, I said, "Listen, we will meet up with you again."

I remember when he first told me he was a lieutenant from BITS, too, because he was a lieutenant, but he was wearing, you know, stuff like you guys. I don't know what the hell he was a lieutenant of. So for a minute, I was, oh, EMS. I said, "Oh, what battalion?" He goes, "I'm with BITS," and I remember I started laughing.

I said 31 Henry, Tour 1. 31 Henry, Tour 1. I said, "Don't forget it. If you catch us sleeping

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remember us," but I said, "You know, we are going to hedge our bets, and we are going to try to walk down to the ferry, and we're going to see if, you know, we can hitch a ride over back over to Brooklyn, and we get down to the ferry, and we have -- there was a surgeon that was over there that looked us over.

We spent a little bit of time at the dock trying to figure out, you know, what ferry was leaving for Brooklyn, and eventually they got us on a ferry, but then they took us back off because they had -- they got us a ride with harbor patrol.

All this time is, you know, hours are going by, you know, and we -- eventually the NYPD harbor patrol takes my partner and myself over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, because they said, you know, "Where do you want to go in Brooklyn?" I said, "Anywhere, wherever it is. I'll walk the rest of the way, get a cab, whatever, who cares. Just get me back out there."

They took us in the Navy Yard, which is pretty close to here, so I was pretty happy, you know. I said, "This is great. If I have to, I know I can walk to the station."

So we -- there was a security guard. I mean, there was a -- you know a small entourage of

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firefighters on that side that met us. They walked us over to a van, and a security guard was there, and the security guard gave us a lift back to the station, and we got into the station, and I remember he pulled up, and, man, I was really hurting at this point. I was sore as hell, because I remember every bump that he hit going down Park and coming down, and I was, like, I'm going to murder this guy because he hit some big potholes, and we get into the station and Gordon and I, I mean, dragging ourselves with whatever we had left.

I don't know what time it was. I'd have to look at my ACR's that people wrote on me, but I remember we came inside, and people were like -- they gave us, like, a double take, because they, you know, they all thought we were dead, because when we were radioing out, the guys were in the lieutenant's office listening to the radio, because we were on Brooklyn North, and all they are hearing is us, you know, going through these transmissions. We are buried in here. We can't breathe, you know. The building came down us. We are trapped in the rubble, and these guys are all in here crying, thinking they are listening to us die.

Meanwhile, you know, four hours later or five

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hours, six hours, whatever the hell it is, we come stumbling into the engine bay that -- the garage there, and, again, I mean, we must have looked pretty awful.

I mean I know I felt pretty awful by that point, but we got into the station, and like I said people did a double take. They were, like, oh, shit, you guys are alive, and they came in and like immediately like -- it was just like ants jumping on us, and, you know, sat us down, and got us some Gator Aid, took my boots off, and then started going through the, you know -- blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

You know, we have to take you to a hospital. I'm, like, I don't want to go to the hospital. Who cares what you want, that kind of thing. So it was kind of weird, you know, being on the opposite end. People -- what is your date of birth? What is your Social Security number? I'm, like, those are my questions. Don't be asking me that crap.

So we went through the -- we went through the whole rigamarole. We were boarded and collared and did the whole nine yards and they took us over to KCH, and we went in there, but that was like the -- as badly as I was beaten up at the trade center, these guys, they were -- they murdered me.

BRIAM SMITH

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BRIAM SMITH

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[REDACTED]

He wasn't working. They called him in. He's working right now, but he's okay. It's just your father. No one has heard anything from him.

So I called over to HazMat, and I was able to get through, and I said, "Listen, blah, blah, blah, take a message, and I'm trying to find out. What's the story?" Well, who's calling? I explained to him who I

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was, where I was, and I remember the guy was crying.

He said like, we lost them all, and after I got discharged from the County, I came back here, got changed, did some paperwork with the lieutenants, because I had the uniform here. I got changed, and one of the lieutenants here, one of my lieutenants -- one of the tour one lieutenants gave me a ride over to Haz-Mat 288 in Maspeth in Queens, and I went in there, because I figured maybe these guys would have, you know, some more news and what have you, and I went in there, and the captain pulled me in the office and basically went through the thing.

He's, like, listen, you know -- because I told him. I said, "You know, don't beat around the bush with me. You know, I'm MOS." I said, "You know, other than the fact that I'm his family, so be straightforward with me."

He said, "Well, the last radio transmission we had from your father, he was on the 11th Floor of Tower 2, and then it came down, so we haven't heard a word from him since, and to this point, no one has heard anything from him since, so he's, you know -- they haven't made any kind of recovery or anything like else like that, but, you know, from there I get picked

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up.

One of my fire chiefs from my fire department on Long Island, a friend of mine came out to -- because they were only letting emergency vehicles in the city at that point. They shut down the expressway. So he came in. He picked me up. Went home, and the rest is, as they say, is history, but that's pretty much, you know, soup to nuts, I guess.

Is there anything I missed on the question sheet?

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with BRIAM SMITH. The time is 934 hours.

File No. 9110144

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MARY MERCED

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 23rd, 2001. The time now is 2312 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I'm with the New York City Fire Department. Tonight I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, your rank and your assignment.

EMT MERCED: EMT Mary Merced, Division 3.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: What's your rank, Mary?

EMT MERCED: EMT.

Q. Can you please give me your account of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

A. On September 11th -- well, let me go back. I work with Deputy Chief Goldfarb, and we were working 6 Charlie the night before. We had a meeting at 7:00 in the morning which exceeded our end of tour time.

Once we left the meeting, I was monitoring SOD and I heard a police officer yell there was an explosion in the World Trade Center. It came in broken up, but I made it out. I told

the Chief, "Did you hear that?" He said he heard what I heard, but I had to repeat it. The police officer gets back on again and says about an airplane but didn't complete the word. I said, "Oh, shoot." I said, "An airplane crashed into the World Trade Center."

I quickly lit up the vehicle, and I'm heading towards Manhattan.

Q. Where were you coming from?

A. We were coming from -- we had a meeting here.

Q. At the division office?

A. At the division office, the Division 3 office, right.

I'm heading towards the Battery Tunnel, and all the while it's being confirmed, we're hearing it over EMS citywide and the PD radio and fire radio. When I was heading towards the Battery Tunnel, you could see the smoke on one of the towers. It was unbelievable. Initially I thought it was an accident.

So we proceeded, made our way in heavy traffic into the Battery Tunnel. The second plane must have hit while we were in the tunnel,

because as soon as I came out, both buildings were on fire. I just looked up in awe. I never thought that I would ever see this.

It's ironic to talk about premonitions or stuff like that because two weeks prior to this -- I'm always talking about it. I always say that we're not prepared, that hazmat doesn't have enough training. I've got other training outside of here. I'm a WMB technician, I got the national certification from Jersey City Medical Center and stuff like that.

I'm always saying I learned more and I know that when I was taught in hazmat, they thought me this much is not enough. Chief Goldfarb, the funny thing when we started our 6 Charlie tour that Saturday night prior to this happening, he said, "Mary, you know what? I'm going to check all the MERVs and the LSU trucks because if something happens then I'll be sure we're prepared." It's funny, Saturday night, Sunday night and Monday night we did it. You wouldn't have thought that he would be right.

Anyway, we got to the scene. A bunch of fire trucks and police, fire equipment,

everybody you can think of who was there were getting there or trying to get there. We got out of the vehicle. We grabbed the command board, something we seldom use. We used it one other time on a job.

I parked on the West Side Highway between Albany and Liberty Street, number one X marked on the map. We proceed up the West Side Highway towards the south tower. I see Chief Goldfarb is on the radio and I believe he's talking to Chief Gombo who is in the south tower.

Chief Goldfarb says, "Come on, Mary." I said, "Where are we going?" He said, "We're going into the south tower." It's customary we set up treatment and triage in the fire building. I look up and I said, "Chief, we're not going into this building. I said, Chief, the fucking shits going to fall," never anticipating the whole building but I just thought the floors up there.

I said, "This is not an ordinary fire." I said, "[REDACTED]." He said, "Mary, calm down." He probably thought I was being hysterical. He was thinking I was



being hysterical. I was just putting my foot down. [REDACTED].

He gets on the radio. I don't know what he spoke to Chief Gombo about. He said, "Come on." I said, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I said, "We have off-duty people here. We have units here, they need supervision, they're running around. He looked at me. I don't know what he told Gombo. We collected people. I took this off-duty guy -- I don't remember his name -- so he could help with the command board.

We also had Kevin Darnowski. He was off-duty but in uniform. He was on the way home when it happened, and his wife worked in the north tower on the 90th floor. He told me that his wife was in that building. I gave him a hug and I told him, I said, "Don't go in that building. You stay with me because she may have gone out."

All the time we saw debris falling,  
people either jumping or falling.

Q. Where did you set the command board up?

A. Okay. We went to -- fire had a command  
post across the street, right about here.

Q. By Two World Financial?

A. Maybe between here.

Q. On the West Side Highway, somewhere  
near Two World Financial?

A. Off the West Side Highway. So we were  
there. I set up my command board right by Fire,  
behind their's. There was an underground  
driveway right behind them. That's where we  
were, outside. Then the chiefs were there.

(Inaudible) so they can see what's what.

Chief Goldfarb after a while, he says,  
"Mary, I want you to take everybody and move back  
into the entranceway to the underground  
driveway." So we did that. I'm over here trying  
to get units down. As a matter of fact, we had  
units down, that I put down on the command board  
that's still not erased.

After a while he said, "You know what,  
I don't like the way this looks, Mary." He said,

come, Mary, everybody, we're going to go." We went up to Vesey and West. We went up to Vesey and West. That's where we saw a lot of supervisors and units.

All the while I'm like holding Kevin Darnowski's hand, because I didn't want him to go into that building. I knew if I let go of him, he would be gone.

I look up at the north tower, and I see see colors all the way up there. I'm thinking to myself, geez, I said, is that clothes? I thought since the airplane crashed there, I'm thinking about maybe it's the clothes from the luggage or something. Then I see something else drop. Then I look. I see debris drop. And I look, and it was people. I could tell you almost every color clothing all the people that I saw fall had on, how they fell, if they tumbled, if they swan-dived.

There was this one woman. She was dressed in white. [REDACTED] by this time, he was in shock, almost catatonic. He said, "Mary, do you see that woman falling in white? He said, my wife had the same clothes when she left this

morning."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I had to look because I

knew we were close to the buildings and some of the people falling, debris was falling, and I had to watch out for that. And the noise of the people hitting the ground.

We were about ten yards from and the fire apparatus that was there, firemen and the ESU truck was there. We had set up a staging area with the buses on Vesey Street facing south.

ESU, anyway, they threw us out of that intersection. They said, "We want everybody out. This is a tactical area." I didn't understand what that meant at that time, but I soon found out they expected some ground attack of some sort.

The chief told us to go over in front of the American Express building, everybody set up their equipment and everything else in case we had any patients coming to this side.

Q. When you set up by the American Express, you were still on the West Side Highway

side or you were on Vesey Street?

A. We were here. The buses were here.

Q. On Vesey.

A. Facing south on Vesey, for egress. The chief had everybody go in front of the American Express building with their equipment, stretchers and everything, you know, the usual stuff. After a while the chief says, "You know what? I want everybody inside the building. I want everybody inside. I don't want anybody outside the building."

As a matter of fact, Lillo was in our crowd initially. I'm thinking to myself -- I knew his wife was in there, probably (inaudible). Quinn was a friend of mine too.

Anyway, everybody went inside the building, and I took it to Captain (inaudible). He works at Metrotech. He was with a group of supervisors. The chief and I, we were on West Street. We came back over this way. I tell you, all this time I don't hear any radio transmissions or anything. It was looking and doing automatically. I wasn't even so much concerned for my safety. We just do what we've

got to do.

All of a sudden, that's it, you hear the rumbling and it's getting louder and louder. I'm like, oh, shit. He said, "Mary, run!" I'm thinking, oh, shit, the building's falling. He's saying, "Mary, run!"

We turned around and ran west on the West Side Highway.

Q. You ran north?

A. I'm sorry, this is north? I'm sorry.

Q. On the West Side Highway?

A. Yeah, so then the buses were facing the --

Q. They were facing east or west?

A. They were facing west.

Anyway, we were running north. We got around the corner on Vesey Street, and there was an ambulance, like the last ambulance in the staging area, with the doors open. The chief jumped in there. But I had passed him, so I was like in front of the bus. I remember he said, "Mar." I turned around, and I'm looking at this --

I can't even explain this. Everything

is like in slow motion, like time stood still and it was slow motion. But I knew I couldn't turn back and go to the bus, so I had to keep on running.

So I'm running, and I'm worried about the chief, that he's there. Nobody expected those buildings to implode. They were thinking, it's going to topple. When it's falling, you think it's going to topple. Where is it going to go?

So I'm running, and people are running in front of me. They stop. They turn around. I think everything's over with. So I stop, all of a sudden the thing is coming at us. It was like in dark hell, like a nuclear blizzard. I couldn't explain it. You couldn't see in front of you. You couldn't breathe. You're inhaling. You're coughing. You're running. You can't see anything.

Once the building fell -- because you could hear it -- you couldn't hear anymore. Everything was silent. It was like if I was in a desert. I turned around and police officers are telling me, and other people, that we can't go

back. I said, "I'm going back." I said, "The chief is over there, and I've got people over there and I've got to find them."

So when I went back, the first person I saw like through this cloud is Danny Rivera from Battalion 31. I looked at him. We both were in shock, of course, like everybody was. I said, "Are you okay, Danny?" He said, "Yeah, Mary, I'm okay." I said, "Where are you going? Don't go back there, Danny." He said, "I've got to find my partner." Everybody was concerned about finding their partners. You know how it is.

I'm on the radio trying to call the chief. He's not answering me. In the mean time I'm thinking about chemical and biological secondary devices or if it was there. There was a Hazollah bus, and I said, "Danny, come, we've got to get masks." We got masks. I was handing out masks. Whatever they had there, I gave them out to people. I don't know.

So I'm calling the chief. He finally answers me. I said, "Are you okay?" He said, "Yeah, I'm fine." He asked me where I was. I had made it back up towards North End. They had



I believe it's the Embassy Hotel Suites. We were there. Chief Kowalczyk was there, Mike Ober. He helps as an EMT at Battalion 39. Chief Villani, the guy in the MERV. Police officers, firemen, hacking, coughing. I had my water. I was sharing my water with the firemen, with civilians.

Chief Goldfarb finally came. We just started taking care of patients. We just turned the lobby of the Embassy Hotel Suites into a treatment triage transport area or whatever. We had I think it was a fire chief who had a dislocated shoulder. We had burns to legs, people in shock, minor injuries, leg, arm, smoke.

I remember they brought Gary Smiley from Battalion 31. They brought him on a stretcher. I believe he on -- he threw himself under one of the apparatuses when the building fell. I think some people got hosed down, so they brought him in. He was in shock, all wet and everything else.

He wanted to quickly get off the stretcher to go back. I'm saying, "Gary --" Gary is hyper anyway. "Gary, you're not going

anywhere." "No, I've got to go back." I know he's not thinking clearly. I said, "Gary, you made it out alive. Don't go back and do something stupid." I said, "Stay here. Regroup. You don't know what's going to hit next."

It's a funny thing, because I forgot to mention when Danny Rivera and I made eye contact there was an airplane overhead. You couldn't see up in the sky. You couldn't see anything. Danny, myself and I'm sure everybody else, we were ducking like trying to see where it's going to hit. All the psychological games that come after all of this. At that time you didn't know whether it was going to hit or not.

I remember during that time as well the only radio transmission that I heard was Captain Deshore's. When she said she was heading towards Jersey and she was injured along with some other M.O.S., she was in need of medical assistance and they were taking a lot of people over there. That's the only transmission I heard. Anything else, everything was dead.

Chief Gombo was with us, with other chiefs as well, at the Embassy Hotel Suites.

They don't know what's going on, what's going to happen next, rather. So we had some people transported off the scene to hospitals, and the chiefs, they met and they discussed what their next plan was going to be.

I remember the chiefs were in front of the Embassy Hotel Suites, and I'm there. I said, "Chief, I hear the rumbling noise. The other building's going to fall." He said, "I don't hear anything, Mary." I said, "Chief, the other building's going to fall." The other chiefs are looking at me like I'm going crazy. I said, "Chief Goldfarb, you know I have a keen sense of hearing. The other building is going to fall."

Sure enough, another 30 seconds later, it got louder and louder. Then everybody is going to run, because we didn't see where the building toppled because we didn't know it imploded because you couldn't see anything.

So now we're running, and we go back inside the building here and you couldn't go past the Embassy Hotel Suites because you could see the World Trade Center from there too. It's a big open area on the other side. So we ran back

in there and moved everybody to the left of the lobby, because they have an atrium there on the right, in case it topples on top of that building.

So we were there, and it fell. Of course more smoke, more stuff, papers everywhere. We got a little bit more patients. The chiefs, they do what they do, and I'm helping people, as well as the other medics, EMTs. Then some of the chiefs disappeared. I don't know where they went to.

Then we heard that there was a gas leak in the hotel, so we had to evacuate there. So we evacuated there, and we headed north on North End. That's when Chief Gombo -- they decided Chief Goldfarb would go with Chief Gombo to 1 PP because there was no more -- 7 Metrotech, because there was no more OEM over there.

So that's where we went. We went along with Lieutenant Terranova. That's his name; right?

Q. Ross Terranova?

A. Ross, yes, Terranova.

Q. I noticed that you said 7 Metrotech,

but you meant Seven World Trade -- right -- where OEM is?

A. Yeah, I'm sorry.

Q. That's okay.

A. I'm sorry. Good thing you picked it up. I didn't realize it.

We went to 1 PP, Chief Gombo along with Chief Goldfarb, made decisions and stuff like that. So that's where we were. We didn't sleep. The chief and I went back -- that same night we went back to the site. There was an EMS operation.

Q. At Vesey and West?

A. No.

Q. Chambers and West?

A. Chambers and West. Yeah, at Chambers and West. We were there like every day. Then we hear that people are missing. They had the chief and I missing. Then the frustration not knowing who's missing, who's here, who's not.

It happened, and I was down there yesterday. I know it happened, but it still hasn't registered. I'm pissed at my job for the lack of support. Just the fact that everyone

(inaudible), my family, everyone's family, I'm sure. I mean, we've seen how much support we've gotten throughout the United States and the country, which is great.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It's ironic because during this whole incident I wasn't even concerned about my safety.

I'm here now and I'm not like -- while I'm lucky to be alive, I had a brush with death, you know, I don't even think about it that way. We all did what we had to do, everybody down there. I've gained respect for many people, many people, and lost some for some.

It's going to take a while for everybody to heal because the scars are what's going to remain. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I never,

never take my cell phone with me on the job. I always leave it in my purse or in the car. This day I took it. I didn't even think about it.

My ex-husband called me on the phone. He said, "You're there, aren't you?" That day he had to pick up the girls for his visitation. He said, "You're there, aren't you?" I said, "You cannot believe what I'm looking at. You won't believe it." I said, "You know what? Tell the kids that I love them. I don't know when I'm coming home."

I knew it was going to be a long operation. My family didn't hear from me until that night because the phones were down, the cells were down. Even my childhood friends called my mother, and my daughter who lives upstate, she was frantic.

But I thank God that decisions that were made that day, even by Chief Goldfarb, putting those people in there. It would have been worse because we had 50 people easy. It would have been much worse.

[REDACTED]

But support that I've seen. I know everybody -- who knows, maybe everybody gets television, especially something of this magnitude. But, you know, the dust has settled. We should get better, but I don't see that and I don't feel it and I don't feel support. I really don't.

[REDACTED]



By the way, [REDACTED] wife, she was safe in Brooklyn Hospital. He was a wreck. Unfortunately Lillo went in the building. Aside from that, he was working. As you saw in the pictures, he was working anyway. Quinn, a buddy of mine, that's how he is. I would have done the same thing. I would have done the same thing. Even though I was on light duty, I would have done the same thing.

(Tape ended abruptly.)

File No. 9110145

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF ZACHARY GOLDFARB

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

Z. GOLDFARB

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 23rd, 2001. The time is 2318 hours and this is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001, with the following individual:

Please state your name, rank, and assigned command.

CHIEF GOLDFARB: Zachary Goldfarb, EMS Deputy Chief assigned to Division 3.

Q. Chief Goldfarb, were you working on the morning of September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you please tell me the details of the day?

A. Yes. We were actually working starting from the night before. We started working on the 10th at 2200 as car 6 Charlie EMS Citywide chief. I had a relatively uneventful shift and we stayed here in our office in Division 3 at the end of the tour for a little while. We were in a meeting with some staff

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people here. We left here somewhere around 0830 and were heading home, basically, heading off duty.

As we were heading out on Linden Boulevard, monitoring police special operations frequency, we heard someone scream over the police radio, Central, a commercial aircraft just hit the World Trade Center. Immediately I picked up the EMS Citywide radio and told the dispatcher to assign us to the job. I don't even think they knew at that moment that there was a job because it was just instantaneous and we spun around and started heading out Linden Boulevard.

Do you want to know our route of travel or any of that?

Q. Sure.

A. We headed west on Linden Boulevard from -- we were just about at Pennsylvania Avenue, so we headed west on Linden Boulevard from Pennsylvania Avenue. I was anticipating morning inbound rush-hour traffic to begin with let alone a problem with the Trade Center, and then I was anticipating that the Battery Tunnel would probably be open and clear for us to get through. So I said to my aide, Mary Merced, I said let's go out and take the streets down to the Battery Tunnel and we should be able to get through the tunnel

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and stay off the highway because knowing from how these types of events unfold that the highway tends to get messed up.

So we went west on Linden, continued out, hit the traffic circle by Prospect Park, went around, got onto the Prospect Expressway westbound for about two exits because we could see it was blocked up, jumped off down to the streets and worked the streets down to Hamilton Avenue right down into the mouth of the tunnel. We made really good time, I think, given the distance and the circumstances.

As we got to the Prospect Expressway, that was where we saw the first sight of the towers. At that point my impression was that the first plane had hit but not the second plane. As best as I can remember, there was one tower burning and you could see a huge volume of fire and a lot of damage, and our immediate assessment was this was going to be a major event. Actually, we used some other words, but I don't want to put them on tape.

During the course of our trip, my feeling was, I was the Citywide chief and I was still logged on as the Citywide chief. I didn't know what other chief officers might have been on duty in the morning, but

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clearly this needed some heads-up activity. So while Mary was driving, I was on the phone with the Citywide dispatch supervisor giving him some direction, and among the direction I gave him was to set up task forces in each borough consisting -- I believe I told him ten ambulances and an officer in each borough for a total of 50 and to mobilize them at two crossing points but hold them fast because I didn't know what we were going to need.

I have to tell you that at this point there was no thought at all given on my part to this being anything other than an accident of some sort. Despite training and I think a very high level of consciousness about terrorism and things of that nature, it didn't occur to me at that point in time that this was any kind of an attack, just some sort of an event where a plane hit the building.

It was an absolute beautiful day. The sky was just a perfect blue and not a cloud in the sky. Heavy smoke plumed up coming off the north tower. So we came by Hamilton Avenue.

As I was saying, I was on the phone with I think it was Larry Tobin, who was the Citywide dispatch supervisor, and I was giving him some direction. I

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broke off with him, then I called him back. I told him to activate our regional mutual aid agreement with the Office of Emergency Management. I told him to activate our agreement with the Private Ambulance Association and mobilize all our mutual aid agreements and get everybody moving because it was obvious that this would be a very large patient-producing event.

Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way. Actually, it did work out that way. Anyway...

But those were the things we were putting in place on the way in. Now, I don't know what other direction anyone else was giving. Among other things I told him was everybody off the radio. I just wanted EMS officers on the radio and nobody else. So, again, I don't know what other direction he might have been getting, but he was certainly listening to the stuff I was telling him, and Larry and I work very well together.

So we got to the tunnel. There was already a line, a whole procession of emergency vehicles lined up trying to get into the tunnel. My aide is very good at dodging traffic, so we kind of wove our way around and drove right into the tunnel, and we got about halfway through the tunnel and traffic was stopped. We were in

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the Manhattan bound lane, but it was two-way traffic. We tried to get around them into the oncoming lane, but there's really no wiggle room in that tunnel, it's very tight, and everything was stopped dead.

One thing I remember is that everybody had their sirens on and, of course, the tunnel is not a place for a siren and nothing was moving, so it was very noisy in there. So after seeing that we were stopped dead for a couple of minutes and there were police officers out on foot in front of us, I felt that we were really kind of close to Manhattan.

So, as Mary knows, I have no tolerance for sitting in traffic when I have somewhere to be. So I said sit here, I'm going to get out and pull the traffic, and it was my intent to find my way to the front of this line and pull it so that we can get out of that tunnel because we needed to be out. Also, while we were in the tunnel we were off the radio, so I didn't know what was going on.

So I walked up somewhat to where there was a police officer and he told me that traffic was blocked up because of the blockage on West Street and they're working on it but we weren't able to get out just yet. So at that point I sort of had to acknowledge that I



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guess we weren't moving very far for a few minutes and I walked back to the car, and on my way -- actually, on my way up to the police officer in a car a few car lengths in front of us was one of our off-duty medics, and I don't remember his name right at the moment, but Mary will know in a second and she's probably telling Christine right now.

He rolled down his window very panicked and he was like chief, chief, and I recognized him. I just can't remember his name at the moment. Darnowski. One of the two Darnowskis, Kevin or Jim, one of them. I'm like what's up? He said my wife is in that building. I got to get to her. I said listen. Try and relax. We'll be out of the tunnel in few minutes. When we get out, follow me in to the job, stay with me, we'll find your wife. Very unnerving kind of situation.

Then, as I was walking back from the police officer, a woman runs up to me and, again, we're in the middle of the Battery Tunnel here. A woman runs up to me and the woman is completely hysterical and she's screaming. You've got to help me. You've got to help me. I said what's the matter? She said my son is in the car and he can't breathe. What's wrong with your son? Her son had a tracheostomy and she said it was

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clogged, and I look toward her car, which was a few car lengths behind us, and I can see that there is a boy, a child in the back seat of the car in his car seat, and he's awake and breathing but maybe he looked like he was in a little distress.

I'm thinking to myself I need to be at this Trade Center. How can I drive away from this little boy? We're stuck here in the tunnel anyway. Maybe I'll take Darnowski and tell Darnowski to go help this little boy while we pull out of the tunnel, and even as I'm having these thoughts, traffic opens up and now we have to move because we're in the column. So I said to the lady, we're moving out of the tunnel now. Keep going out of the tunnel. As soon as you get out, make a left and drive around to the hospital. She said okay. Apparently she was on her way to the doctor or to the hospital at the time. So I was like all right, that's one less thing to worry about.

So I told Darnowski get in his car, follow us. Traffic moves up. We pull out. We pull out onto West Street and this is like -- it's funny because it's almost like you thought it wouldn't get worse. Of course, we've seen it got a lot worse. But it was real bad. A lot of apparatus. At this point the second

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tower is going. Huge fire. Huge. You know, in retrospect, I look back and I say we should have thought those towers might not hold. There was a huge volume of fire. But, you know, it was so far up that it's almost away. It's like you can't really get a measure of it. So there was a lot of fire, there was debris in the street, body parts in the street, people all over the place, and you kind of tunnel in a little bit, you know?

So we're driving down and I'm thinking of all the stuff I want to bring from the car out to the scene. Mary, as she always says, where do you want me to stop? I'm like, all right, just keep pulling up. We're now going northbound on West Street. Let me refer to the map. So West Street is a divided street here and we're in the northbound lanes going north and we're weaving away and the cops or traffic folks, whatever, they're doing a pretty good job of moving traffic along.

At some point, I want to say probably around Albany Street, I guess, we cross over. There's a break in the median and we cross over, so now we're going northbound on the southbound side. There's stuff coming off the building. So we stopped -- I think our

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final stopping place was south of the pedestrian bridge. I'm trying to get this right. Maybe somewhere around Cedar Street, but we're on the west side of West Side Highway parked up against the curb facing north, and we're south of this pedestrian bridge. The staging area that they had transmitted was Vesey and West, and there was no way we were going to get up there and there was no way to walk around it, and it was a good stopping place and there were plenty of other people and, quite honestly, if the building hadn't collapsed, I'm sure it probably would have been fine.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map where you had parked your car? To the best of your memory.

A. I'm want to say somewhere like here.

Q. Okay.

A. Something like that.

Q. Okay.

A. So we get out of the car and there's stuff coming off the buildings. There's people coming off the building. We go around and we have a routine. We always try and do everything by routine because my feeling is, when you do everything by routine, then when there's a real crisis, you just follow the routine. I mean, I teach a lot, as you know. People

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do in a crisis what they do every day. So even in our routine, garden variety MCIs and responses, we always follow the same protocol, take the same equipment. We approach everything in the same way, very standard. So we pulled on the scene, we gave an 84 on the KDT. We got out of the vehicle. I said, okay, we're going to take the command board, we're going to take the vests.

The funny thing about the vests, because we've been carrying these command vests, I've been carrying them for years, since before we merged, and we had them made over after the merge and they said FDNY on them, but we have never deployed them, and when we set up the new car the day before, Mary was like, why are you carrying these vests? Why do you keep carrying them, chief? You'll never need them. I said, well, you know, one day there will be a big job and then we'll really wish we had them, so we're going to keep carrying them. Then here we are the next day and we needed the vests. So it's very strange.

Another strange little vignette I'll tell you is that when we started our 6 Charlie work that week, which was Sunday night, Saturday night, Sunday Tour 1, I said to Mary, I think -- she said do we have any plans for this week? I said I think what I want to do

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this week is I want to do inspections on all the MERVs and LSUs and I want to prepare a report for Chief Gombo of what their hardware stock levels are because I just somehow have a gut feeling that they're not at a level that we think they are, you know, ready to respond to a big event.

So on Sunday Tour 1 we went to Bellevue and checked Manhattan's MERV and LSU, inspected it, documented it, I'm sorry I'm off by a day, on Monday Tour 1 we went to Manhattan. On Tuesday Tour 1, the morning of this event, we were in Queens. At 4:00 a.m. I had Mike Sheridan out of his office and we got the LSU running and checking all the stuff. In fact, when I saw Sheridan a couple weeks ago, he said, boy, you had a premonition? I said you know what? I have no idea if I had a premonition or not, but just something was nagging me about those MERVs and LSUs.

So anyway, we pull up at the scene, get out of our car, we start to gear up in our safety coats and our helmets and stuff, which is just routine for us, we take our radios. One of the things that was interesting was that, thinking independently, you know, we have our department cell phone and usually we get out at a scene and she takes the cell phone.

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Independently, both of us opted to take our own personal cell phones with us. In my mind, I had been thinking, I know the Department cell phone is on AT&T, which isn't always the most reliable, mine is on Verizon, if something big is going on at the Trade Center, you know, I might need the one as an alternative to the other, so I grabbed my private one and she apparently thought also of taking her private one. So we both left the car with three cell phones between us as well as all our standard radio equipment. We went to the trunk, took out the command board and the vest set, and the command board is a big thing, so we're dragging this thing.

Okay. So we get out of the car and we start making our way over to the Fire command post. I have to tell you that I can't for the life of me tell you how I knew where it was. I just don't remember. But we weren't dodging around. We went straight forward to the Fire command post, maybe we just saw it, which was in -- there's a parking garage that I think is right here. I'm depicting just south of the north pedestrian bridge, which would be between Winter Garden entrance and 3 World Financial Center. I think that there's a driveway. I think this is the placement of it, but

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it's somewhere in here between these buildings. But I think the driveway is here. It's like a divided driveway to an underground garage and that was where Fire command post was set up.

So we walk along here and make our way to the -- you know what? I'm thinking maybe it was here. One of these two places. You can go there and look where it is, okay? But wherever that Fire command post was, that's where we went. It's one of those two places. So we're walking along and along the way Darnowski hooked up with us and said he was coming with us and we picked up another I say stray because there was a lot of this going along. We picked up another off-duty member who we recognized, Mary probably knows who it was, I don't remember, and told him to come with us. So our jolly band of paras went over to the command post.

We got to the command post. Chief Ganci was there. There was no EMS representation at all at the Fire command post. Nobody was there. A Field Com was there. They had set up the table. Now, I knew at this point that Chief Gombo was on the scene and I think I was under the impression he had taken command. So I told Mary -- again, we have a standard approach to



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this. So I told her all right, set up the command board, let's start documenting who is here and get the information, start setting up command. I knew there was command on the scene and I wasn't trying to take command but rather just get the information to support command. I called on the command frequency to command and I think it was Ross Terranova that answered the radio. I think he was working with Chief Gombo, and I said we're on the scene, we're at the fire command post, what's your pleasure? So he said stand by, and then he came back at some point and said report to the lobby of building 2.

Then in the meantime, during this lag of time, I said a couple words to Chief Ganci. He was being very frustrated about his radio. I remember this. He was like what's that? What channel is this? Am I on the right channel? Goddamn it, the radios aren't working. He was very frustrated about his radio. Chief Ingram, Bob Ingram, was there and I talked to him briefly. Chief Burns was there and the Field Com crew, a bunch of other people, no EMS people. So I said okay, I'm here, you know, I'm reporting and I'm here, whatever you guys need, and they basically didn't have anything to tell me, I

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guess. So I had Mary set up the command board and start documenting who was on the scene.

So she started doing that. She had the two tagalongs helping her, and I'm looking out at the scene and there was stuff coming down. In fact, when we got out of the car, there was a lot of stuff coming down and I have to say that I was a little bit fearful that we were going to get hit with something coming down, you know, there was debris, there were I guess what I later learned were pieces of people coming down off the building. We got out of the car and Mary was like transfixed. She was just staring at this thing.

One of the things that I've learned over time is sometimes it's better not to look at stuff because sometimes you don't want to see things, you know? You see them, you start thinking about them, and then you can't do your job. But, of course, the downside is sometimes there's stuff that you don't see that you need to see. So anyway, Mary is just transfixed and I remember I had to tell her about five times, you know, we're prepared, let's go. She was just -- I don't know. It was like, come on, Mary, let's go, and so we went, we proceeded on.

So as we're standing at the Fire command post

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looking at that stuff, you know, we're looking at what's going on, I told her and the other two guys, I said get in under the mouth of the garage. Everybody else was on the tarmac almost like at the curb -- not at the curb but kind of midway between the garage entrance and the curb where they were operating, and I said get under the overhang of the building so that you'll be shielded from stuff coming down. So they went down there and did that.

So I call command, as I said, and they tell me the chief says report to the lobby of building 2. So I called down to Mary. I was standing at the command area and Mary and the other two were down under this overhang and I called Mary and said come on, get the stuff, we're going over to the lobby of building 2, and I start to walk out to the street and my aide, who certainly earned her living watching my backside that day, looks up and sees stuff coming off this building and me, I mean, I don't know how far I actually would have gone, but I was prepared to follow orders and charge across the street and she was like, chief, you can't go across the street, there's debris coming down, I was like, come on, Mary, let's go. We've got to report to Chief Gombo, and she got upset with me. She

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was like, listen, you can't go across the fucking street, there's fucking debris coming down, and at that point, I guess, I looked up and I realized that she was right. There was like a shower of stuff coming off this building.

I have to tell you that standing below this building where we were standing looking up at a fire that was -- I don't even know what floor the fire was on, 80 or 50 or 70 or something like that. We didn't appreciate the extent of damage to the building that you would have appreciated if you were standing in Brooklyn or Jersey City looking at it, and in retrospect -- and I think about this day and night, but in retrospect, I think it's possible that the command, personnel in command, if they could have seen what you would see from Brooklyn, might have had a different assessment of the hazards of the building than what you could see from the street because you're basically looking straight up a vertical cliff, two vertical cliffs, and you're seeing the bottom of some smoke and fire and you see debris or whatever, but I don't think you had a full appreciation of the extent of damage, how many floors, the size of damage. Now, they may have had other sources of information for that. I

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don't know. But this is just my own assessment and I have no other source of information.

So anyway, I heeded my bodyguard and I called command back on the radio and said we're not able to make it across the street at this point. I'm at the Fire command post. There's no EMS representation here. Do you want me to take a liaison role here? He said okay, ten four. So I do that. So I come back to -- I guess a deputy from Division 1 was there and I just said okay, I'm here as your liaison, tell me what you need, and in the meantime my team was working on getting an assessment of what we have on the scene and they started writing up the command board, which is still downstairs written up and everything.

We were there, I don't know, five or ten minutes and then Chief Kowalczyk reports to the command post. As we had left Brooklyn, as we were heading out of Brooklyn, I called him on the phone, he was here in the office, and I told him, I said, Walter, big job, World Trade Center, we need you, come on out. But he was already moving. I think he heard the second alarm transmitted and he was already moving. So he reported to the Fire command post and I briefed him on what I had known, the little information I had at that point,

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and he said okay. He said go down to Vesey and West and take command there of operations on Vesey and West.

I have to tell you that at this point, up until this point, I'm saying to myself, I know this job. I've been here before. I was there in '93. I was the south tower commander in '93. I've seen this building in peril, I've seen a thousand patients. I mean, there's nothing freaky about it. It's just a big job. Okay. We've done big jobs. I do this. So I think that -- maybe I'm projecting now -- many of us were thinking that kind of thought. So he tells me go down to Vesey and West and take charge there. Okay.

So I leave the Fire command post and I proceed now north on -- I take my little band of warriors and we proceed north on West Street up to the corner of Vesey and West. We're in the southbound lanes of travel walking. We encounter probably about, right around here, we encounter about 40 or 50 EMS providers with stretchers and equipment and all sorts of stuff just standing, basically, not engaged in anything, just standing by waiting for instructions right here in the southbound lanes of traffic just along the median.

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I see Jace Pinkus is there with them and I think Howie Hahn, who is a lieutenant, I think it was Howie Hahn he was with, and the scene over here was basically these streets were kind of clear because there was stuff coming down. North of Vesey on West Street were lines of ambulances and apparatus parked here or staged here or trying to get through here or stuff like that and there were all these members on the street, and they weren't treating patients. There were no patients apparent at that point in time. So I called all the officers together, which I think it was Pinkus and Hahn and I'm not sure of what other officers there were. It was just sort of a motley crew. There were EMS guys and voluntary guys and Hatzolah guys and numerous other people that looked like they were part of an ambulance team.

I called them together and I told them that I was taking command of Vesey and West and that I wanted to set up a triage and treatment area, and I told them to set it up in front of, that is to say, on the east side of 3 World Financial Center, on the street there. There's a pretty large, open kind of climate over there. I told them I wanted them to set up over there. I told them I wanted them to clear the street

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and I said be aware that there was debris coming down from the buildings, so hug the building as close as you can, 3 World Financial Center. I told Captain Pinkus to make sure he had accountability of the people who were in this area, all of these people are now his, so you've got Hahn and whatever other officer might have been there. I said go over there and establish accountability and prepare to set up to treat patients.

My strategy at that point was that we would be getting patients probably coming out of 1 World Trade Center trying to evacuate and the injured there, we would handle them there. At this point I was not thinking of triage and treatment in the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. I didn't feel that it was safe to be operating on West Street, you know, on the street or close to the front of the building, so I wouldn't have committed anybody at that point. Remember I had already made the decision not to go first to 2, so we weren't going to go across to 1. So I pull them up against the building.

Charlie Wells comes in and he wasn't really reporting to me. He was kind of moving past me, I guess. I think he had already some other marching



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order. But he had come in from the north going south and he stopped at my area. I told him -- maybe we talked for just a minute and I sort of exchanged information with him and said do you have a mission? He said he was reporting to the command post or something like that and he continued on. Commissioner Von Essen came by that way and I saw him and I talked to him just for a second and he went on to the command post.

Then I called Pinkus on the radio and said -- no, wait. Before this I think Chief Villani came down and -- let me back up. Wells came down and said he's here with a number of ambulances, he's got a bunch of ambulances staged north of Vesey Street on West. So I told him, okay, have the crews report here. We're setting up triage and treatment. Then he went on to the command post.

Then the next person I saw was Villani. Chief Villani reported to me and I said do you have an assignment? He said no. I said okay. I said would you do me a favor? Recon to see if we can stage on Vesey Street off of West heading west and if there's a way to get out so that we can cycle our rigs out of there without having to recommit to West Street because

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West Street was getting blocked quicker. So he went to recon and ultimately he got back to me and said yes, we can go out North End Avenue, there are already some rigs up there, and he was going to set up that staging for me on Vesey to North End and that would have been the egress route for those rigs so you'd be clear of West Street debris.

Along the same time frame, I called Pinkus on the radio and I tell him I don't like the looks of things coming off the building. I said recon the lobby of 3 World Financial Center, see if we can set up triage and treatment in the lobby there for a casualty collection point. So Pinkus reports back to me that, yes, we're able to do that. I tell him okay, get everybody inside the building under cover, everybody in the lobby, let me know when they're starting to establish accountability for the people. So he goes ahead and does that.

So now basically I'm on this corner and my recollection is that the street was kind of -- it wasn't like hugely packed with people. It was kind of empty, some cops and some firemen and us, and a cop comes over wearing heavy tactical gear and starts shouting at us, this is tactical area, clear the area.

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What I found out days later was that the sergeant on 6 Truck, his name is Sullivan, I think, he was on TV, had at some point made a determination that this was a terrorist attack and began to think what if there's ground troops also, I don't know, if this is supported by some kind of a ground attack and here are all these cops in heavy vests clearing the streets.

So anyway, he starts shouting at us this is a tactical area, clear the area, and not just at us but everyone that was there. So we had actually moved onto Vesey. We were really right at the corner of Vesey and West. Pinkus calls me back and tells me everybody is under cover, they have no patients, all the people are accounted for, there's plenty of space in the lobby, they're back from the windows. So I felt comfortable with that. So at that point I have accountability for what's going on. They have no patient contact. I'm really starting to wonder where the patients are.

We're standing on the corner and I'm standing here and Mary is here, the MERV is here, there was a line of ambulances here that are staged pointing west and we're about a car length apart from each other and I was looking up Vesey Street and she was looking at the building watching people coming out of the

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building, and all of a sudden I hear her say, oh, my God, chief, it's coming down. I turn and I look up and the building was coming down, and all you saw was this huge cloud. I mean, I didn't see the building coming down. I just saw a cloud of (inaudible) coming down, just a big black cloud. So I was like, let's go. I knew the people in my area were clear, but we were just near enough. So I'm like, let's go, and she was just transfixed. She's like, oh, my God. I'm like, Mary, let's go.

So we start running west on Vesey Street and she outdistances me, and as we were running, I saw -- remember I told you this was a beautiful day and it's like suddenly dark, like a thunderstorm brews, you know, suddenly it's like big, gray clouds, and it's almost a feeling that something is overtaking me is I guess the way I would describe it. Mary runs past me, but I guess we're kind of running together, and all of a sudden I look up and I see an ambulance in front of me, back doors open, no stretcher, kind of saying hop in here. So I did. And I'm calling to Mary, come on, thinking there's some shelter there. She had already come around the side of the ambulance, so she was already past me when she heard me. She just decided

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she was going to keep on going. But now I'm committed to the ambulance.

So I jump in, slammed the doors. It seemed reasonable at the time. I have no idea actually how I got from the street into the ambulance because obviously I made it inside, but my legs were hurting for two days after or three days. So I must have projected myself somehow. I don't know.

So now I'm in the ambulance and I hear stuff, you know, debris hitting the roof and stuff coming down on the truck and you look out the window and there's just swirling clouds of gray and it's getting darker. I'm like this is pretty cool, I've got a little shelter here, and then I realize there's stuff starting to come into the truck. So I'm like why? I closed the door. This is kind of just going through my mind. I was very calm about this whole thing. So I look up in the cab, and it was a voluntary ambulance and I know it was because you could walk through into the cab, which is probably a good thing. So I look in the cab and I see that both windows were rolled down, power windows. Hey, the truck is running. So I powered both windows up and that stopped it somewhat, but it was coming in through the vents and I realized the AC was on. So I

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shut the AC off. So now the windows are up, the AC is off, doors closed, and it was better. But I'm coughing already, you know, there's stuff coming up. So I'm like this is not good.

A good question might be why didn't I think to just drive the ambulance away? I never thought of it. But what I did think of was, hey, I'm in an ambulance. If there's oxygen, I'll put a mask on, then I'll be able to breathe no matter what comes around the ambulance. So I got an oxygen mask out, I started looking for the valve to turn on the oxygen, and I'm looking for something thinking, if something comes crashing through the roof, I know it's only a sheet of aluminum, maybe this wasn't such a bright place to be after all, I'm looking for a back board or something to get under, but there was nothing in there.

I look out the window and I'm thinking should I try and make a run for it or run further? But there's all this stuff going on outside like a nuclear snowstorm. It was unbelievable. Unbelievable. Stuff like da-da-da-da-da pounding on the roof of the truck. So I just kind of scrunched up on the floor with my oxygen mask under that arch between the cab and the walk-through thinking that might be the strongest roof

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point, and I just kind of scrunched up there and I had protective gear on and I said, you know, I hope I'm able to get out of this. I remember it was really quiet. There was no screaming on the radio. There was really nothing going on on the radios. It was just -- it was quiet.

So after some period of time, I don't know, minutes, seconds, I have no idea, after some period of time it sort of lightened up outside. So I said, hmmm, it looks like I can get out. So I got out of the truck. There was a lot of stuff floating around, but I could see and get out. So my next thought was -- well, you know, before I even got out of the truck I was thinking of Mary and she was contacting me, she was calling me on the radio, and I called her. I said I'm okay. Are you okay? She said, yeah, I'm okay. I said where are you? She tells me she's up the block. I said okay, good. I said I'm going to regroup, try and get our treatment area back up, if it isn't up, in the lobby of 3. So then she tells me or we discover that one of the buildings we think had collapsed. You really couldn't tell because there was just clouds and smoke, but it was like it wasn't there. I can't begin to tell you how weird this thing was and what a strange

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feeling this was.

So I go into 3 and I find Pinkus. I think I talked to him on the radio first and then I find him and he tells me everybody is okay, we're all accounted for, no problem with that, and I'm saying, my God, if I hadn't taken these guys off the street, they would have all been under this thing. That still freaks me out. That still freaks me out. It would have been an awful lot of guys. So thank God they're all okay.

Q. Good command decision.

A. Lucky command decision.

In fact, he did tell me, when I saw Jace a couple weeks afterwards, he told me that -- I can't remember. I think he told me Quinn had been with our group at one point and then afterwards wasn't there anymore. Quinn's wife was the one who worked in Tower 1, I think? Maybe I'm confused. But he had apparently left the group to go strike out after -- to try to find his wife at some point, and that was the one member that we didn't have accountability for after.

So anyway, the lobby of 3 World Financial Center kind of wraps around the building here. So originally they were operating here. Now everything is full of -- there's windows broken and there's debris on



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the east side. The structure seemed like it was stable. So we decide to pull everything over to the west side of the lobby around the corner.

The strangest thing, because they must have been having been some kind of reception in the lobby of this building, they had tables lined up with bottled water. Go figure. There were cases of bottled water, and it was just what we needed was bottled water and here they are, cases of bottled water. So people were coming in and there was plenty of bottled water to wash your eyes or get them a drink and people are coughing and choking.

So I tell Pinkus get his people and start moving them to the west side of that lobby. Am I talking too much?

Q. No. You're doing great.

A. The next thing I remember is Mark Stone comes in completely covered with debris, completely freaked out, coughing. He's like, he said, Kowalczyk's trapped under there. I said what do you mean? He said Kowalczyk was with me, he said, and when the thing came down, we started running and I looked back and he was gone. He's trapped under there. I was like, you know, on the one hand I was like I really don't need you to

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tell me this right now. On the other hand, it's like, okay, so here we are at the doors to hell and you're going to tell me Kowalczyk is trapped there. What are we going to do about it? So he was like, let me take a couple of guys and we'll go back and dig him out. I said listen. If he's trapped under here, you're not going to dig him out with a couple guys. We need to get to the command post and get a team and go after him. I said are you okay? because he was coughing, and he was like I'm okay, I'm okay. I said okay. I said can you make your way to the command post?

I have to tell you that I'm not sure what happened or where the command post was at this point. I didn't know -- see, this situation was like war in that, you know, you've heard the expression the five of war? Too much stuff happened sometimes too quickly for you to sort it all out and make logical decisions based on what's real, so you just sort of -- you don't have all the information. You try and make the best decisions with the information that you have, which is flawed, and you kind of go from there because you have no alternative. You don't have enough information and the information that you do have, including stuff that your own senses bring you, you can't process it.

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So my thinking is the command post is still where we left it. I don't really know at this moment, this is like two minutes post-collapse or five minutes post-collapse, I don't know what's collapsed. In fact, I mean, it was clear that something made a big mess, but I don't know what it is or how bad it is. I was not able to get around to recon it. My first priority was to make sure my men were okay, my people were okay, which they were. My second priority, as I understood it, was to carry out my mission, which was to have a casualty collection point there, and so we were doing that.

So when Mark presents with the idea that Chief Kowalczyk is lost, my direction to him was to go to the Fire command post, take another man with him, go to the Fire command post and get help for Chief Kowalczyk, lead them to where he is. So I gave him that direction. Fortunately, as we later found out, Chief Kowalczyk wasn't trapped at all. But, again, sometimes you don't have all the information.

So I had Pinkus trying to get things organized and something is nagging at me. It's clearing up outside, it's clearing a little bit, you know, you start to see a little sun. I talked to

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Mary. She was up on the corner helping them with some transports and some patients, some resources. Something tells me I want to find another exit out of this building.

So someone was with me. I can't remember who it is at the moment. Someone was with me. I said let's go recon another way out of this building. Let's see if we can get out toward the water in case we have to retreat from where we are. So we go out through the back warrens or through the back lobby of 3 World Financial Center and we find like an exit corridor that leads us to an exit door which actually takes us out, I guess, right onto this promenade here. So that's pretty swift. The time sequence is just kind of jumbled. I'm not sure how -- the sequence that you gave me, what time did the south tower collapse?

9:55. Okay. And the north tower collapsed at 10:20.

Q. 10:20.

A. Yes. So figure 9:55 that collapses, figure at 10:05, 10:10, something like that, we're in the lobby, we're looking for this exit pathway. In fact, my strong sense is that it was Stone with me again, like maybe he had reported to the command post, come

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back, maybe we had found Kowalczyk by that point, something like that. I think Stone was back with me again, and I remember Chief Carrasquillo came through here and we gave him, because he was coughing and choking, we gave him some water. We were starting to get a few patients, not a lot. It wasn't like 100 patients.

There was a lot of trouble getting through to the command post on the radio. Previously there had been a couple of frequencies in use. When we got on the scene, we were on command. Then we were trying to use tact 2. I was using tact 2. When I set up Vesey and West, I had Pinkus go to tact 2. We were using tact 2 to communicate so it would be clear, and we do that, Mary and I do that all the time, so we know how that works. We routinely at events do that. So I was on tact 2 with Pinkus and she was on Citywide command talking to the MERV.

At some point a decision was made, actually before I left the command post, to start switching this whole incident onto Manhattan south so it would have its own frequency and that was underway, and that was a great decision. In fact, that should be standardized. We should just do that. That was a great decision

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because it gives us a complete clear from everything frequency to use. But anyway, that was underway.

So here I am -- I know I'm jumping around a little bit, but I'm just trying to give you the pieces.

Q. You're doing great.

A. So I come out and I see there is this promenade over here, you know, it looks so beautiful down by the water, it's sunny and bright and clear, and I see some people over there and I see the ambulances over here and the street is just covered with stuff, and something tells me -- I call Pinkus on the radio and I said listen, get everybody together and get all the equipment, I said, and proceed -- I said I'm going to send someone back to show you the back way out. Use the back way out, get everybody out here, we're going to relocate on North End Avenue, the whole triage area.

Q. That would be North End and Vesey?

A. North End and Vesey. We're going to move to North End and Vesey. And you know, I can't tell you why I gave that order other than maybe it didn't feel safe being in that building. I don't know. I can't tell you why I gave that order. Something made me do that. So he acknowledges the order and I move down to North End and Vesey.

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Here's the corner of North End and Vesey, and right here on the northeast corner I encounter Chief Gombo was there, Basile, Pascale, Kowalczyk, my aide, their aides, a bunch of people, and we were just trying to get a handle on whatever it was the hell happened because we're not sure. Pinkus is pulling these people out of here. They pull out and we take over the -- we move the treatment area into the lobby...

(End of tape side A.)

Q. ... interview with Chief Goldfarb.

A. So we're on the corner. We moved the treatment area into the Embassy Suites Hotel.

Q. Do you want to take a break or go on?

A. You know, I've told this story 10,000 times, but to tell it with the level of detail that you want, you have to walk through it, and when you walk through it, sometimes you remember things you'd rather not remember. But I'll deal with it.

Q. If you need a break, just let me know.

A. Thank you.

So what was interesting about the Embassy Suites is that, when you come in, there's a huge atrium area here, high, very high, lofty ceiling with glass, plexi, whatever. So we go in there and then off to the

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North End of that lobby is a covered area. I remember seeing a covered area because the building was above. So we go in there and we have to be sure that we're clear of that atrium. So the team moves in there and they start setting up a treatment area in there, and we're out on the street. Now we're getting patients. Patients are coming in to us.

Suddenly, my hero, my heroine, and I say that just out of total respect for her, says chief, the other building is coming down. I hear it. I'm like, Mary, try to stay calm. The other building is not coming down. Again, in retrospect, I mean, it's funny, you know, you just weren't processing this. Who could absolutely process the idea that a tower of the World Trade Center has collapsed and when you look you don't see it? Who could process that?

I'll tell you that to this minute I have no idea, no concept whatsoever as to what the injury count or the impact on us, operationally, organizationally, peoplewise, was of just that discrete event of the one tower coming down. I know the total picture. I mean, I don't know if you have any idea what that is, but I have no idea.

Q. No, I don't.



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A. But I have no idea. I don't know who was trapped, I don't know who was lost. I mean, we lost eight EMS people. I don't know if they died in the first tower, the second tower or in the middle. I have no idea. I don't know if anybody knows that.

Q. I don't believe that's known.

A. But anyway, she's like no, chief, I hear it, and she said you know I have very keen hearing. And she does. She said you know I have very keen hearing. She said that building is coming down. So we -- and we're standing with a bunch chiefs -- we say all right, you know what? Let's just move into cover. So we clear everybody off the street, we get everybody in under the sheltered area of this hotel inside, and you can't believe it. The second tower comes down. This was just a day of such mind-boggling stuff.

So the second tower comes down. Huge clouds, huge -- the same thing. It's like, hey, I've been here already, you know? Just horrible. The strangest thing is I don't remember noise associated with it. You would think that would be a very noisy kind of thing, and I just remember quiet. I don't know if like your ears disconnect or something? I don't know. I don't remember ground shaking, noise, any of that stuff, and

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I was right there. Much too close.

So this comes down and now we have a much larger area of debris outside and the cloud and stuff everywhere, and we're in the lobby and we're treating patients. I'm not treating patients, but the teams are in the lobby treating patient and now we're getting more patients. We had moved around a table in the lobby, the chiefs, to try and plan a little strategy here and it was just too chaotic, so we decided we're going to pull back. We go into like a back corridor here at this Embassy Suites Hotel, and it's Gombo, Terranova, myself, Kowalczyk, Basile, Pascale, and we're just trying to have a little bit of a strategy session, and I think all of us are like just kind of blown away by what was going on.

But we had a very rational brainstorming session where we reassessed, number one, we were under attack. Number two, we've probably taken a huge impact on this. Number three, we're not winning. There's no success in our staying here. We don't know what's going to collapse next, blow up next, get bombarded next, the next thing coming, whatever. We don't know if we got nuked. We just didn't know what was going on. So we acknowledged that we were shy a lot of

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information and we decided to take three strategic decisions, all of which I think are important.

Number one was we knew that there were other resources on the scene and okay and working because we could hear some of it on the radio, but we weren't able to get through. We were having a lot of radio trouble. We couldn't get through on the cell phones. We were just having a lot of trouble getting through. So we knew there were players on the scene doing stuff on the scene. We decided that our best immediate strategy was to pull back clear of the scene, try and regroup, not bring more resources into the scene because we didn't even know how big the scene was at this point. We didn't have a definition of where the scene began and ended.

So we decided to set up two mobilization points, one north and one south, direct any further response into those points, and try and pull back whatever forces we could to those points so we could regroup them, and basically we decided to leave the scene in the hands of the people who were there while we tried to get a little better picture. We were also mindful of the fact that we didn't know what else was going on in the city, we didn't know what else might

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get hit in the city, another target or something. We knew we were under attack of some kind by somebody, but we didn't know the status of any of our operating forces. We didn't know the status, we had no picture. We just -- again, no information.

So we decided to activate these two mobilization points. We chose Chelsea Piers on 23rd and West, which was my choice because I knew it was a big spot, big open space, that there's plenty of room in there to set up casualty collection, staging, really anything you want, it's huge and sort of right there. It's a little further away maybe than you would like it, but then again, that's not necessarily a bad thing, it wasn't far. The second place we chose was the ferry terminal, the Staten Island ferry terminal on the Brooklyn side -- no. The Staten Island ferry terminal on the a Manhattan side.

So we tried to get through. There were a couple times I was able to break through to Citywide dispatcher, and we tried to get that information to him that we were setting up those two points. We tried to see if there was an unaffiliated chief or someone who hadn't been committed to this thing already that we could send to each of those places to set those up. I

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don't think we were successful in doing that.

So Walter Kowalczyk and Frank Pascale went north to Chelsea Piers. I'm not sure who we sent to the ferry terminal. I don't think we were able to send anybody from there to the ferry terminal. I can't remember at the moment what the task was. Pete Carrasquillo and Chief Gombo and myself were going to go to -- we decided we had to go to -- it was clear that we had to get a citywide command center up because we had a citywide problem. It was also clear that 7 World Trade Center, which was the OEM command post, was not going to be accessible.

So Chief Gombo suggested Police Plaza is the place to go, and he was actually on target, a totally right suggestion. So we decided that Gombo and myself would go to Police Plaza to set up the big picture and Kowalczyk and Pascale would go to Chelsea Piers and work the scene picture and the evacuation piece of it and we would try and get someone over to the ferry terminal, and that was our strategy.

So we broke up from that. I think Basile might have just stayed there on the scene working the scene. I can't remember what it was that he was supposed to do. So we broke from that and -- I'm

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sorry. I said Basile but I think I mean Pasquale.

Q. I believe Basile went over to the ferry terminal?

A. All right. So we leave there. As we're coming out of our little brainstorming session, the lobby is now full of patients, lots of patients, some of them our own people, our people helping other people, a couple of ESU cops came running into the lobby and they start shouting everybody out, we've got to evacuate the building, we've got a major gas leak in the building, everybody out of the building right now, right now, everybody go. And you're like what else? Are we going to get like frogs also? What else is going to happen here? So we start helping get people out of the lobby and, you know, it starts to get spooky, like you think, gee, is this building going to blow up as I'm trying to leave it or something? It became very strange.

We get out to the street. I can't find Mary. I'm calling on the radio. She's not answering. She was two blocks up helping another ambulance. But we finally hook up. So Gombo and Terranova and myself, when we catch up with Mary, start proceeding north on North End Avenue to get out of there. Like how are we

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going to get to Police Plaza? Well, we're going to walk. There's no other way to get there. This stretch here, this North End Avenue, this is like a wasteland. I mean, not normally, but it was like a wasteland. Everything was covered, vehicles skewed every which way, injured people, people helping other people, rigs that won't start, and I felt like a refugee fleeing some war-torn country.

As I thought about it later, it was the first time in my life that I ever felt that an incident beat us. You know, we go into an incident to control it. That's what we do. If you're a control freak, that works for you even better. You go into a scene, you take command, you assess whatever the problem is and you manage the incident. That's what we train, that's what we do, and here we are going into an incident that is beating the shit out of us and has actually pushed us back and chased us away and we're leaving behind our wounded, we were leaving behind who knows what, we're leaving equipment, we're abandoning equipment. We took all the people that were with us, but we were abandoning the equipment, some of the equipment, and we were just trudging out through the dust like just a defeated army. That's how I felt. It just felt

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terrible. It just felt terrible.

We get up to like Murray Street and we look back and where there used to be those two beautiful towers -- and I'm a New York born my whole life. I mean, I watched those things go up. I always lived with those there, you know? Where there used to be those two beautiful towers, and all you see is the sunshine and a huge cloud, a huge cloud, and I said to Mary, turn and look at that because you'll never want to forget that. She just looks at me with these eyes and she was (inaudible). I will never forget that.

She told me later how she was watching those people falling out the building, which makes me think, I read this thing in the Times a few days later about a class that was evacuating from one of the schools and how one of the students turned to a teacher and said look, teacher, the buildings are on fire.

So we proceed up North End Avenue, met up with some crews with some patients and we're just all kind of walking in this direction, and we turn back and there's huge clouds of smoke and dust and everything and we had stuff, our masks on, I popped my hood out, covered my face. We had surgical masks, stuff like that, just to keep all of the stuff out. It was so



surreal.

We go up I guess to Chambers. We walk up to Chambers Street and then over Chambers by the school and then we start walking north on West Street and we still have -- Mary still has these two guys in tow that have been with us all along, Darnowski, and Darnowski is convinced that his wife is dead. In fact, at one point Darnowski and Mary were standing there watching these people falling out the building and a woman jumps and whatever she was wearing, maybe all white, and he turns to Mary and just like blank and said my wife is dressed in those clothes today. So Darnowski is just in shock. He's just catatonic. He was just tagging along with us, he and this other guy. When we get to West Street, I tell Mary we've got to leave Darnowski with somebody else because we have another mission, find somebody that will take care of him and we need to move on.

Some of this decision making really feels like combat decision making, and I don't have war fighting experience, but a lot of these were like decisions you make in combat, you know, cut off the foot to save the life, stuff like that, leave this behind, abandon equipment. It was just stuff that we

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don't do and train for. It's just unusual decision making.

Our plan is we're going to go north on West Street to like North Murray -- is it North Murray Street? I think it was North Street and try and work our way around and get to Police Plaza. So we're walking and all of a sudden I notice Mary is not beside me and I look and she's like 40 steps back and she's like hang on, chief, and somehow, I don't know where she conjures this stuff up, but a good aide does this kind of thing and she is absolutely the best. But she find a cop on a golf cart in the midst of all this insanity and tells the cop you need to take the chiefs to Police Plaza right now, and this cop just sort of says okay and all of a sudden pulls up next to us, there's Mary with a golf cart saying everybody pile on.

So Gombo and Terranova and myself, Mary, got onto this golf cart and this cop takes off, and there we are driving a golf cart with dust swirling around us and everybody just kind of -- there was not enough seats for all of these people, so everybody was just kind of holding on for dear life and this guy just drives us through the streets. I will never forget.

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Everything was covered with this schmutz, ash, dust, and everybody is in shock, just all of the people, everybody was just freaking aghast. I swear to God, this was the most unbelievable experience. I can tell you what time that was. This was right around 11:15. So when did that second tower come down? 10:30 the second tower came down? So the time fits very nicely.

So right around 11:15 we finally pull up at Police Plaza, give or take, I'd say give or take 15 minutes, we pull up at Police Plaza, and as we -- the guy drives us right to the front door and with cops all over apparently there were M-16s out, I mean, MP-5s. They were ready for war over there. We just pulled right to the door, get off, brush our stuff off, you know, and walk in. As we get off the golf cart, Jerry Gombo said something that I will remember forever because it showed really true leadership on his part. He turned to us all and said, okay, first order of business, find phones and call your families and let them know you're okay, and that was just -- you know, Jerry spends a lot of time inside and I think he did a good job under fire. So I think he earned some respect on the part of some people.

Q. It says a lot about the man.

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A. So we go upstairs trailing our cloud of dust like Linus in the Snoopy cartoon and we get there and Police Plaza is busy and -- well, how far do you want to take the story?

Q. Roughly noon, somewhere around then.

A. We walk in. We were the first Fire or EMS representation there. We were probably among the first people to actually come in from the scene covered with dust and everybody was looking at us like, oh, my God. They were watching on monitors and stuff. It used to be the old OEM command center. That's now the police operations command center.

So we report in, tell them we're here, they make some space for us, then we all get to the phones and call significant people, let them know at least we're alive, and then we set about big picture coordination, and what we did for the next eight hours was large-scale disaster stuff. A lot of it centered around ordering federal resources, USAR teams, EMAT teams, planning how we were going to deploy them. We planned to set out three casualty collection points. All the strategy came from us when we were in that command center. We planned to set up three casualty collection points one at Javitz Center, one in the

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Brooklyn Navy Yard, one in the Staten Island ferry terminal, at the Yankee Stadium, at the new Staten Island Yankee Stadium, and we pulled down some extra resources for the casualty collection points, not using EMS assets because we didn't have any.

We had a tremendous problem communicating. The phones there weren't working. They were intermittent. The cells weren't working. The radios weren't working. Very, very hard communicating out from there. There were some resources that were up, but we didn't know about them, like Verizon phones and stuff like that, not Verizon, Nextel phones, but we didn't have a Nextel phone. So we just really had a lot of challenge in terms of getting that up and running, but here you have a huge disaster, an improvised command center and a lot of infrastructure stuff like phone lines and switching stations damaged. It was probably surprising that we could accomplish what we did.

We set up a separate emergency operational center for ESFA, Emergency Support Function Aid, which is from the federal response plan, health and medical assets, I'm pretty well versed in all this stuff and I've been doing this kind of planning, you know me,

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I've been doing this kind of planning for 20 years, so I knew what needed to be done. Bill Connelly was there, the State Health Department's regional disaster planning guy, and I knew him personally, and when he showed up, I told him exactly what I wanted him to do. We got space from PD and set up the ESFA operations center. We briefed them on the information that we had and on what we anticipated, which at that point, early in the day, was thousands of patients, and we made out a concept of operations for them and told him what kind of resources we were looking for, helped them get organized. We got reps in from Health and Hospitals, Greater New York Hospital Association, Nassau, Suffolk Hospital Council, Nassau Health Department, City Health Department. We tried to get Nassau Health Department. I don't know if they came. City Health Department, State Health Department, later on in the day a FEMA rep joined us and started planning for deploying EMAT teams.

So we got all of this up and running. We coordinated a zillion bizarre requests, and I have a log that goes from 1130 until when we stopped writing about 1900, just things that were going on. I see my first entry at 1130. New Jersey had sent Bob Resitar

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from the University Hospital, he's one of their assistant directors over at University Hospital System, they had sent him, in fact, they were there before us, and Frank Goodstein from the New Jersey mutual aid, and they were there before us. So they greeted us and I have a log entry at 1130 and they tell me they had 4,000 patients between Ellis Island and the Hoboken PATH station and various shore points on New Jersey that all these people were coming over by boat and landing.

So here we are coordinating mutual aid and we told them don't send us any mutual aid from Jersey. You guys work your thousands of patients and we'll get the mutual aid elsewhere because obviously you're stretched. I'm not sure what they ultimately ended up with. I think that number crunched to like 2,000 or 1,500. But it's still huge numbers.

The SEMA rep was there. The State Department of Health rep was there. We told the SEMA rep we wanted to activate the regional mutual aid plan, and we ordered five task forces of ten ambulances and an officer at each point from the east, Nassau and Suffolk, and one from the north, Westchester and points north, and we had a plan for this. I mean, I don't

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know how many people really knew that this plan existed, but I knew the plan existed because I was working on the task force. Gombo didn't know it existed.

So we ordered that would have been 100 ambulances, 50 into a staging area on Randalls Island, 50 to a staging area at Shea Stadium. Again, we weren't sure what we were doing with them. We didn't want to commit anything more to the city until I had a sense of what was going on and you really couldn't get any good (inaudible) at the scene. We didn't really know what was going on there. So we figured, okay, let's order 100 trucks, at least that will give us a jump and we'll see what we need to do from there. So we were able to communicate to the point where we had highway patrol and an EMS supervisor at each of those sites waiting to catch this mobilization as it came in. Then we started fielding buffers and supplies, shipments of stuff coming in. So my decision was to send all that stuff to Randalls Island where I figured it could at least be secured, checked and secured with some accountability before it gets deployed someplace. We spent basically the next eight hours running the command center, fielding decisions. At the outset we



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were doing the Fire side of it, too, because we were the only reps there, and then a couple of chiefs arrived in a little bit of time. Tom Galvin got there and Ed Kilduff from the Fire end of it.

What's funny is that a few months ago Tom Galvin and I were in a course together on weapons of mass destruction, incident management, and during one of the breaks in the course he and I were having a conversation about the World Trade Center bombing because in the course, among the course material was the FEMA U.S. Fire Administration report on the first World Trade Center bombing, which included a section written by Steve Kerr and myself. So we were talking about that in class, that I had written that.

So Galvin and I were talking about it and now it's after the merger and how would we respond, and I told him that, for reasons I won't go into now, that the response would be very different if we had to relive this thing, different not necessarily in a positive way. So here we are four weeks later and we were actually living it. It was just sort of one of those strange ironies in the world, and the Fire guys, I mean, there were Fire deputy chiefs, but they weren't emergency management experts, they weren't prepared to

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really look at the big picture emergency management issues, so we were helping with that as well.

We stayed there and -- mind you, we had been out since 10:00 o'clock the night before. So we were with that until about -- my log logs off -- I mean, you can see how my handwriting deteriorates. I guess I was getting tired. My log logs off at 1900, and we went to try and find a place to sleep. I remember that. So we couldn't find a place to sleep. We ended up taking some blankets and laying out on -- there was a little strip of grass like two feet wide alongside the stairs that went up to St. Andrew's Plaza. So we laid these blankets out and then we just laid down. We didn't know if we were going to go to sleep. Every noise I would just like jump. It was so weird. It was so weird.

So after about an hour of tossing and turning, Jerry and Ross come by and they said that we were relieved upstairs by Captain Connelly and that we could go. They said they were going back to the scene. So we said, oh, okay. So we went upstairs to get our personal equipment and come back down. So we set off for the scene Mary, myself, this guy Bob Resitar from University Hospital, and along the way we

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pick up nine or ten off-duty members who were on their way in to the scene to be of help.

So we take this little procession and march up to Chambers and West and do what we can at the command post at the back of the Suburban, and Chief McCracken and Chief Kowalczyk and a bunch of other people were trying to get a handle on things and we ended up -- we tried to sort out the leadership manpower so that some people could go home and be fresh in the morning. So then we decided, Kowalczyk and myself decided we would stay the overnight shift. So at 6:00 a.m., I think, while some people went back and got some sleep so that we could get a fresh relief in in the morning and then start another 12-hour cycle. So we stayed there.

During the course of the night we got in two field communications trucks from New Jersey, our mutual aid brought them in and set them up, so we had like a real working command center because we don't have any assets like that for EMS operations. So we got those trucks from Jersey and we put the full ICS structure into place with a planning section, logistics section and a coroner operations section, a finance administration section that was contemplating how we

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were going to structure that. So we developed an incident action plan for the morning, which I actually have a copy of here somewhere. (inaudible) an incident action plan so that they could get started in the morning.

Do you want me go on?

Q. Just go on until you feel you don't want to go any further.

A. I guess the story is close to the end of this day.

Q. Okay.

A. So we work through until like -- I'll just keep going. So we work until about 6:00 in the morning. This is now Wednesday morning. We started relieving. So now we get relieved at 6:00 or at 7:00, we get something to eat, and we decide we're going to go find our car. So we get a Gator. Whoever ordered the Gators, that was just an absolutely wonderful decision. I mean, those were so needed there and it was just the perfect tool for this job and still is to this minute. So we catch a ride on a Gator and we ride over to south of where we had parked the car, as close as we could come, and then we continued on foot through this just unbelievable devastation, and when you go on

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foot, you couldn't even recognize the street to know which block face it was. I was like a block north of where we were and Mary was like, no, chief, we weren't that far north, and I'm like, yeah, I think we were. But we weren't. She was right.

So we're finally just kind of peering around the rubble pile and we see the car, and the only way we recognized it was that it looked like it had some molten light bar on the top, not that it was recognizable as a light bar, just a little heap of molten something that maybe, you know, you could say that once was a light bar. We look inside and actually the car is not crushed or anything, it's just burnt. The only thing that was left in that car that was recognizable at all was the metal piece of a stethoscope and some melted chips from my Palm Pilot and that was it.

We lost, aside from the vehicle, which had 93 miles on it when we pulled up at the Trade Center, we lost the vehicle, we lost thousands and thousands of dollars worth of Department equipment. Mary lost her pocketbook, all her personal effects and her license and ID and badge and everything a person carries in their pocketbook. Of course, when you work like we

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work, your car is like your locker and everything is in it, and we certainly had everything in that car and it was all gone. Laptop computer, my Palm Pilot, everything, personal clothes, everything. So we brushed ourselves off. Our ride had left us. It was like what else is going to happen?

So we walk over to the Staten Island ferry terminal figuring we'd catch a ride from there, and we catch a ride from there on a supply truck that was dropping off supplies. He gives us a ride to Maspeth, and I was hoping to get back our old car, the '95 car, which we had just turned in the day before to get the new car, but they had already given that out to someone else. So they give us an old Suburban, which was fine. So now it's like 10:30 in the morning on Wednesday. Drive home. We were due back there on Thursday morning. We were the 6:00 a.m. relief on Thursday morning.

So you'd think you would be able to go to sleep after this, right? A long long time before sleep. I guess that's the end of the story.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. I think a lot of people did an incredible job that day and in the days since. I think that this

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isn't over. I think that the people that are looking at this event as, you know, horrible tragedy, World Trade Center, kind of like it was an earthquake or a hurricane or something and now we're recovering and we're having concerts and we're burying our dead and we're trying to pick up the pieces, number one, are forgetting that we're at war, and I think that this was only act one, and I think that we're dealing with a very evil adversary who has a completely different value set than ours. I think there will be more acts of war like this. I hope they're not in my town. But I think that, if we fail to prepare for them, we're foolish and naive, and I think that we've got a lot of work in front of us.

I think there's a tremendous amount of resources in this organization to be applied to that stuff if it's used appropriately. I think there are a lot of good lessons to be learned from this that we should try and learn. I think we did a lot of things right and I think there were a lot of other things that we could do better or opportunities for improvement, as they say. I think we'd better fasten our seat belts because I don't think this is over. No thinking person could think that this is over.

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The other thing is that we keep talking about the losses on this job from an EMS standpoint and we say there were two, Carlos Lillo and Ricardo Quinn. There were six other EMS professionals that died in this incident on our mission, and it's not their fault or anybody else's fault how we let this EMS system, it would be a hodgepodge of voluntary hospitals and voluntary ambulances and commercial ambulances. But you know what? They all came in to do our mission and I think that they need to be recognized as such and I think it's a disgrace to us that we're not counting the names of these six dead people who were just as heroic and just as dead as Quinn and Lillo on the same mission. I think that's a real shame. That really bothers me. It really bothers me. End of report.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is concluded at 42 minutes past 12:00 on October 24th. Thank you very much, chief, for conducting this interview.



File No. 9110146

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT IMMACULADA GATTAS

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

## I. GATTAS

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 17, 2001. The time is 1229 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department on the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm at Division 6 to conduct an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assignment?

A. EMT-D Immaculada Gattas, shield number 1443.

Q. Your assigned --

A. Assigned to Division 6.

Q. Today we would just like you to recount the events to the best of your ability on September 11, 2001.

A. Okay. That day started with a beautiful day and we were just talking about that, how beautiful, sunny and warm it was, until someone from next door from the Division came running toward us, told us to turn on the TV. We turned on the TV and we started watching the news, saying that an airplane had just crashed against one of the World Trade Center towers. We were like oh, my god, what a horrific accident and we were just watching on and off until we found out there was another one on its way and it crashed against the second -- it crashed against the second tower.

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That's when the Chief, Chief Pascale, told us to stand by, because we couldn't just rush into the scene. We needed to be requested first. So then she was called in, she told us to get our gear and radios and stuff and just get ready and go on to the vehicle. That's exactly what we did.

It took us a few, 15, 20 minutes to get downtown. We took the West Side Highway. It was packed with cars and a lot of roads were blocked by NYPD and maybe that's what saved our lives, because we were supposed -- we were riding with Chief Pascale. It was, in fact, Chief Pascale, Lieutenant Michael Cahill, Steve Pilla, which is a paramedic, ALS coordinator, Neil Sweeting, ALS coordinator and myself. I'm an emergency medical technician.

We were supposed to go with Chief Pascale to the command center, but because we were stuck in traffic, we got there a little bit later than we were supposed to be, and as soon as we start parking we start seeing people running our way and we were about -- we were very close to West and Vesey and we saw people running and running and telling us to get out of the way, that -- to run for our lives. We were like -- we would try to drive away from that area until we

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could no more. It was close to 20 feet, those 20 feet, then we just parked and hid until everything subsided.

Q. Where did you hide?

A. I guess buildings and vehicles and stuff like that.

Q. You got out of the car and you just ran?

A. Yes. We just ran.

Q. You got separated?

A. No, not at this time. We were not running together, but we were running toward the same area and at the end we just managed to find each other. We went around the corner where we were, I'm not sure exactly where that was, we were running along Vesey Street after the first building collapsed. I think that it was West Street heading south from West Street. That's where we finally -- we got together, Chief Pascale, other staff members, and then we went out inside one of the buildings.

Q. Do you know which building that was?

A. No, I don't know the name of that building, but we were doing patient care there. I was also doing patient tracking, just writing down their names, where the patients were taken, writing down the name of the unit numbers, and they were coming from private

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ambulances or EMS ambulances or municipal ambulances, you know, stuff like that, so I was tracking all that information, and I remember going inside this building again and as I was tracking this patient information, they told us run away, you have to evacuate immediately, because the second building is going to collapse.

We were like oh, my god, it can't be possible. Patients were already hooked into their oxygen lines and their masks. They were strapped into long boards and all that kind of stuff and there was too many of them, so we had to unstrap them, removed their face masks and just assist them as good as we could, because there was too many for us. We are doing this or just let them die there. Believe me they run. As soon as we let them go they just disappeared, as we did. We started running and running and running and I just remember, I think Lieutenant Cahill running next to me. He was just -- it just -- we were just running as fast as we could and I remember one second or moment looking back and seeing the cloud.

First listening to this sound, this thundering sound and then silence after that, like eerie silence, until the cloud caught up to us and

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surrounded us and you could see no more. Then it was silence and it was thousands and thousands of millions of particles hitting our skin. It felt like something was hitting my skin like glass and I couldn't see anything, nothing.

I remember feeling a sharp pain on my left arm, but I didn't see blood or anything like that. I just kept running. Could hardly see, you could hardly breathe. I put my face inside my shirt. I had my helmet on. I didn't have any protective breathing devices on. I didn't have my turnout coat with me at that time. I only had my helmet, so I pulled the shield, the eye shield down to protect my eyes a little bit, but not that much, and covered my face with my shirt and just kept running and the only thing I was able to listen was to my breathing. I mean it was -- oh, my god, it was such a weird feeling. It was just like hu, hu, hu. Slow motion like in a tunnel. You are just running, running, running, followed by firefighters and EMTs and police officers and members of the media.

I saw this member of the media falling on the ground, picking up his equipment, running again, crashing against the fence. All of us running at like,

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I don't know, like a stampede of animals and just looking behind and running and running until we could see no more. Suddenly this crowd of people split. One went to the right and one went to the left. I went towards the left. I followed this group of people. I couldn't see where I was running or where I was going. I just followed this group of people until I saw an opening.

I didn't know where I was getting, where I was going, but I saw this opening, and I said these people are going inside that place, that's where I'm going. We all went inside. We squeezed inside this area, big guys, short people. I mean it was incredible, and as soon as everybody got in we closed the door. Total darkness, everybody, some people were crying, some people were coughing, some people were just completely -- in complete silence. It was like the end of the world, my god.

At that second when I was running I just couldn't think of anything. Just running, something in my mind -- my brain was saying run, run, run or you are going to die. This building is going to fall on you. I didn't have any idea of how far or how fast I run, I knew I had run.

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I went inside this building or this thing that happened to be a construction trailer. After our eyes got adjusted, adapted to the darkness, that's when we were able to see each other and we start -- people from the construction trailer handed out paper towels with water and we used it to clean other peoples' arms and faces and noses and it was spitting out dust and that's all we were doing for a long, long time. We were just spitting out and this lady said oh, my back was hurting and we just helped her sit on the floor against the wall.

Just for a while, I don't know for how long, we stayed in that trailer in darkness, until one of us said okay, let's open the door. We have to open the door. We were scared to death to open the door. We didn't know what we were going to find. So we opened the door and we saw this oh, my god, everything covered by dust. Everything, a cloud, everything was surrounded by dust. People walking like zombies, covered in dust. Just like we were, but walking like zombies.

We tried to pull some of them inside, cleaned them, and we helped them as best we could until it was safe for us, for everybody to go out again. It's like



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this trailer, this is where I managed to go inside the trailer with one of my Lieutenants, Lieutenant Cahill, and after he got out and I got out, we got separated again. I think we met one more time, because we were just walking in circles, met again and another place where someone, another EMT helped me irrigate my eyes, because I had contact lenses, so you imagine me running in this cloud of dust and who knows what, couldn't hardly see, hardly breathe, hardly do anything, just run for your life.

So this guy held me. I took off my contact lenses, irrigate them, put them back, check my arm, which was okay, and then just go back again until someone said that we had to run again because there was going to be a manhole explosion. We had to run again.

Without thinking of anything -- really my only thought was during the -- before the second collapse, after they said the building was tilting, just take care of the patients, get them out of the building so they could run at least and save their lives. I see some of them just run because everybody got separated, all the members of the Division got separated. The patients disappeared in the darkness. We disappeared in the darkness.

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After they told about the manhole explosion, then everybody got separated, and I went a separate way, I don't know, I was completely disoriented. I encountered patients or people just running scared to death, people that were disoriented as I was, trying to find a way out of that area.

I kept on walking, running and walking, and running and walking, until someone saw me and picked me up. It was an ambulance that was picking up emergency personnel. They were picking up paramedics and EMTs and police officers and firefighters. They took us to the -- drop us at the bus terminal, somewhere on the West Side Highway.

From there, we were taken to the Chelsea Piers. EMS people were taken to the Chelsea Piers because they didn't want to us stay in that area. It was too unsafe for us. We were told that at Chelsea Piers were going to be used as hospital -- different sections were divided. One was getting ready as an operating room, the other one as a critical area, the other one like for first aid and stuff like that.

We started getting busses with hundreds of doctors and hundreds of nurses and members of the clergy from different denominations and medical

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equipment and all these areas were completely staffed and completely ready for what we were expecting we were going to get, which was patients, which we never got.

We got approximately 150 patients, but this was after 7 o'clock p.m., 7 p.m., but before that we were expecting hundreds and hundreds, which never showed up, because almost nobody made it out of that collapse of the buildings, which was so horrific, because you go there thinking you are going to be able to help, thinking you are going to be able to, you know, assist someone, and after the first collapse we were able to help people, we were able at least, you know, people that had chest pains, had difficulty breathing and broken bones and things like that. We were able to help them, but after the second collapse, the only ones that survived were the ones that were able to run, and the ones that were able to run that made it out of there were disoriented and went back. I got disoriented. I didn't -- no idea, the slightest idea where I was, which was very scary. You couldn't see. You didn't know where you were, you didn't know if you were heading back because at the end you were just kind of walking in circles. I guess God was with me and I made it out of there and had to, you know,

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deal with frustration and guilt because I had to go through that because you are trained to save lives, not to just witness a horrific destruction and no bodies found, nothing found, just dust. Just dust.

That dust, I'm telling you Christine, it was so freaking itchy. I was itching for hours and hours and hours. It was like glass stuck in my skin. I went -- I don't know how many times I went to the bathroom to wash. It was like, like I had to get this thing out of my body and I cleaned my nose and my face and my arms and that thing, that dust, that stuff and when I went home, I took two baths and I still couldn't get that stuff out of my skin and I was coughing and spitting up stuff for days after that.

When we went to the Chelsea Piers, we just got ready and we were like working at a frantic pace, just trying to get (inaudible) and equipment and oxygen tanks and face masks and non-rebreathers and all this stuff to set the tables, because we had tons of tables lined up with all the basic equipment in the critical area and the other one, the operating room had lights and surgeons and everything. We had pediatricians and surgeons and we had-- anyhow, it was incredible, and also we had in the ice ring, we had an area that was

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already set up as a temporary morgue, thinking that we were going to be able to locate bodies and send them at least to the Chelsea Piers.

So everything was actually set up and ready, so as time passed, we became so -- oh, my goodness, so upset and so frustrated because we were not getting anybody and the doctors that were there were more and more worried and upset and wanted to go to the Ground Zero area. They wanted to help and I think some of them managed to get authorization from EMS command to go to the Ground Zero area. That's what -- a group of them went with equipment.

I stayed there until probably not that late, until probably 7, 7:30 after that. The Chief told us that we had to go because we had to come back early the following day. And we left.

Q. Anything else you want to add to the events that happened prior to 11 o'clock in the morning?

A. 11 o'clock. I just couldn't believe when I saw the first -- I heard about the airplane crash and I said oh, my god, what a stupid mistake this pilot made, how could he miss the tower. After the second one I knew it was terrorism. I knew. My husband, he works at One Police Plaza and he called me and he said I'm on

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my way. Did you hear about the news. I said yes I heard it. I said I'm on my way to work. That was the last that I heard of him until I was able to call him again earlier after 2 or 3 p.m. that afternoon. He was also stuck underground for a couple of hours and so I was worried about him. He was worried about me. My son was in school and he was very worried about us.

Q. How old is your son?

A. He is 12. He was very worried. I just still today -- I can't believe this, I can't believe this happened, but I think that we as a team proved. We got together, we got closer, we were afraid, but we were not afraid. We never thought about dying, we only thought about helping other people. Just got really frustrated because we were unable to do that. We tried to do our best. We just couldn't do much. We just, you know, it was horrific and I can't -- I know I said this many times, and I cried a lot since then.

I cried with my husband, I cried with my son. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

When I saw -- after I got home and I saw those pictures and I saw the people falling, oh, my god, that was when

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I realized how bad it got.

I was there, but I really didn't realize what was going on, but after the second collapse I didn't really know how close we were, but after we saw the map and we realized that we were just a block away, we were around the corner and that we were supposed to be there and just fate kept us away. Just fate that we are here telling our stories because God was looking after us and I still remember this and I know I will never forget that day.

I don't know what else to say. I don't think a lot of people have a lot to say about this. Just about the pain and the sorrow and the guilt. I felt guilt so many times, regrets. I believe we should talk to a lot of people. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] It really showed the extent of the destruction, the full blast, what the collapse made of

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I think that we were just as affected as everybody else, as any other members of any agencies involved and we should be given the same treatment and the same attention in terms of psychological stress and medical treatments, because we were very concerned after that.

The fact that I felt all that itching and all that pain and I was so -- I'm telling you I was so exhausted for days and my legs hurt so much from running and coughing for a couple of days and I got a huge hematoma on my arm, which I don't know how I got it. I know it happened after the second collapse, something hit me. It went away eventually, but (inaudible).

I was very happy that I made it out and that all members of my Division made it out. That's all I have to say.

Q. Thank you very much.

A. Thanks to you for coming and for listening to my story.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This interview is now concluded. The time is 12:53.



File No. 9110148

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MICHAEL D'ANGELO

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. D'ANGELO

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. Time is now 0845 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Michael D'Angelo, EMT, badge 5645, assigned to Division 1, Battalion 4 of the EMS command, New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting the interview in the Division 1 conference room. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Michael, would you?

A. I work tour one. I was working tour one, 1 Adam that day, which actually sits at the Trade Center. I got off at 8 o'clock in the morning. I returned to Battalion 4, changed into my civilian clothes, hung around for a few minutes and left approximately, little after 8:20. I proceeded over the Brooklyn Bridge towards home. I wasn't paying attention to the skyline on the BQE, but I'm sure if I was I would have seen the first plane hit. I was wondering why there was so much traffic.

Making my way through traffic, I got into the area of the trench in Carroll Gardens between the Brooklyn Bridge and the Battery Tunnel when I received

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a phone call from a family member saying that a plane hit the Trade Center. I then noticed numerous papers flying about in the air. First thing I did was I called up Battalion 4, I notified them I was returning to work. I then called my family and notified them what I was doing.

Then as I made it through traffic and I was going over the BQE extension to get back on to the Battery Tunnel, I looked and I saw the second plane hit the building. I then made a round, I made my way into a line of fire trucks using my identification and went into the Battery Tunnel. I followed Ladder Company 132 through the tunnel. It took a few minutes to get through to the other side. When I got through to the other side I parked my car on West Street, right around near, right about, right at the -- almost to the exit of where the Battery Tunnel empties out.

I proceeded to run down West Street until I found an EMS Chief, Chief Goldfarb. He informed me, he says -- I told him I was off duty. He said okay, stay with me and my aide and you are going to assist us in setting up a command post. At first we were right next to where the Mayor had set up his command post and the original command post of where the Mayor was standing.

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I was actually standing next to Chief Ganci before he ran in the building. I remember that distinctly.

Then we moved it down. We moved down into the front of the American Express building. He wanted me to go inside and check out the inside of the American Express building to see if we could set up a triage area there, see if there was enough room. There was enough room, but we still weren't sure of where we were going to set up. I had a little bit of a table and everything set up outside with the command board and everything and we were just going through the steps of taking in units and we just weren't really sure if we were going to stay there right that second or -- so that went on for numerous times.

As I watched the building burn, people jump out of the building, I can't tell you how long that was. Then I began to hear a rumble, I turned around and saw debris flying everywhere, the building came down. I ran up West Street, across Vesey and the whole street was blocked with emergency -- there was all trucks, but luckily there was a small Sedan command car, which I jumped over the hood and then ran up the block, up Vesey Street, then I got engulfed in a large cloud of --

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Q. So, on Vesey you were going towards the water?

A. I ran in front of here. I ran across the street here and I ran west down Vesey Street. Then that big cloud of smoke hit you. At first I was -- at that point I didn't see Chief Goldfarb. I thought he was gone because he was standing on West Street at the time. I thought he was gone so I just -- I began by directing ambulances around, up North End Street, North End Avenue, because then they had set up, I believe they were about to set up a triage area in the back of the theaters, the Embassy Suites, I believe is what it was.

I remember going back outside and I began pulling -- bringing firemen that were walking around covered and blind. I was just breaking out the water, cleaning out their eyes, cleaning out as many guys, seeing if anybody was hurt. I would just grab them, give them a quick pat down on their bodies to see if anything was broken or anything. A lot of them were just in shock, not sure where they were.

I made my way down towards the water, where they were -- where those New York Waterway ferries were bringing over water and such. I was leaning over and

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bringing that up. Again I kept cleaning eyes out. Something I noticed from when I was standing in front of the Embassy Suites at the time, I saw that the US Secret Service were bringing somebody, an Arab man in a suit, covered in soot, walking away in handcuffs. I remember that distinctly, because the guy looked right in my eyes.

From there I remember just -- I don't remember treating, exactly treating guys, I was more like just seeing how severe people were. I mean I helped put guys in stair chairs, but in this time I'm not in my uniform. I had a T-shirt on and jogging pants. So I am just -- I remember assisting -- I moved Chief Cassano from one backboard -- one stretcher to another and I helped them put the collar on him, but around at that time it was a little bit fuzzy.

Then we decided, me and somebody else -- I at this point, thought most of my Battalion was wiped out, until I started seeing a few faces. I only saw like 5 or 6 faces and at least I knew they were okay. But then I decided to throw an extra -- I threw a few, I threw a few oxygen bags over my shoulder. I began running up Vesey Street again, not knowing that the second tower was going to come down as soon as I

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reached the corner again.

So I had to rip the stuff off my shoulders and run back up Vesey Street. I believe I dove into either the back of the American Express building or I dove into the 4 World Financial Center. Just dove into the doors and in the corner and then I realized this isn't exactly smart. I don't know how this building is coming down. So I ran out again. Ran down towards the water. Then I stayed upwards around the area, like I said, just continuing to grab people to see if they were okay, how bad people were, treated. I just remember I had one guy with just a laceration on his elbow. I just said to him, just go, go somewhere else. You will be okay, you can walk, leave the area. That's what I told any civilian, I said -- that wasn't hurt, run north, go north. I remember also after maybe the first tower fell, I skip around --

Q. That's okay.

A. I remember hearing the F 15s flying overhead and that was scary because we thought they were flying more planes. I didn't know what was going on. I thought the guy brought 15 planes and were just going to fly them into the area, so I remember the F 15s flying overhead. I remember the big, big cloud of ash

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that just -- it didn't make it towards the water really. For some reason it stayed away from the water, I remember that.

But -- that's basically what I kept doing. I was directing traffic and I didn't really like sit down and bandage anybody or nothing like that, but I was really just giving people on site triage. I found firemen that I knew and asked if they were okay. That's basically what I was doing. I was just checking them. I mean I was just taking bottles of water and cleaning their face and cleaning the soot out. I made them lie down on the ground and irrigate their eyes. I did that for, like I said, an unknown amount of time. That's what I did there until about probably 11 o'clock.

Q. Okay. Do you remember where on West Side Highway you met up with Chief Goldfarb?

A. Right about the pedestrian bridge.

Q. South one?

A. Yes, right before the south pedestrian bridge.

Q. Between Cedar --

A. Right around there I saw him and I got his attention.



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Q. Okay. And --

A. My car was like really at the exit to where the Battery Tunnel. That was my car.

Q. From when you met up with Chief Goldfarb, you came up here to --

A. No, first we went here. We were going to set up a command post at where the Mayor was. That garage there at first we were setting up. Then we were told to move down to here and set up a triage area inside the American Express building. That's where we started massing units, like I remember numerous ambulances just parked in the street here. Fire trucks lined the block. ESU trucks up the block here. The MERV, I remember the MERV almost hitting me in the back with its ramp. As I was running away they had the ramp still down.

Q. Okay. Do you remember aside from Chief Goldfarb any other people from EMS that you encountered that morning?

A. Let's see, who were the guys I found? I had one guy that worked with me. He was off duty too. He met with me. Brian Cirillo. He was with me until the second -- he was with me almost, like in and out until we ran back up the block for the second collapse. Then

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we ran back and then I lost him for the day. I didn't see him for the rest of the day. I saw the unit of 2 Boy on North End Street. That was Mike Mejias.

Q. An EMS unit?

A. Yes, EMS unit. EMS. Another guy, Garfield Gray, he was driving -- he was running back in and bringing whatever undamaged vehicles, ambulances back down around the street, because they had lined up on North End to do their jobs. I remember that.

I remember -- actually I remember one guy. He is a paramedic. I don't remember his name. I remember it distinctly because he met up with us at the first command post. And he had like maybe a -- something with wolski I think. He was a paramedic off duty, but his wife was, he said his wife was up on -- I don't know, I don't know the name. His wife was I believe at work at one of like the hundred and something floor in one of the buildings. I think it was the north tower. I remember that distinctly because he just -- he really was just very emotionally broken up. He wasn't able to work.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't see him after that either. I don't know what happened to him. Obviously he is alive,

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because I'd hear about it. Like I said I don't remember the last name.

I saw who I thought were gone -- was my -- 1 Adam, the unit I work with, two guys. You see that 89 is Church and Fulton Street. So I thought they were the first ones gone. They managed to get out because they took the first people out. They pulled the first people out of there and I managed to meet one of them, one of the partners down here, down in front of the Embassy Suites.

I remember too, the cars started to explode inside the parking lot. I mean, the cars started cooking off, they started going off, boom, boom, boom, boom. I remember that.

Q. Do you remember the partner's name from 1 Adam that you met on --

A. Yes. Frank Puma.

Q. Puma?

A. Yes. So that's -- like I said, I remember seeing a Chief running across the street. I remember that distinctly. I remember seeing the Mayor distinctly. I remember seeing the Commissioner arrive and make his way to the command post.

Q. Commissioner Von Essen?

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A. Yes. I don't remember seeing any deputy -- Commissioner Feehan. I remember seeing numerous people jump from the windows. I remember that distinctly. I saw numerous people jump. Then actually when I found my car, I found my car like later, later on in the day, but I left it there, because it was not able to be moved because it was covered. There was an airplane tire about 10 feet away from it. I remember that.

Q. Right.

A. So yes, basically I just stayed and I did as much as I could as long as I could, you know. The one thing I don't know -- I just didn't have my uniform on me. I would have liked to have my uniform and a helmet on my head because that was -- but then again maybe I'm lucky I didn't have a helmet on my head. Like I said, I just didn't have my equipment on me. Now I keep it with me at all times. I keep everything in my trunk.

I was running around in a pair of jogging pants and a white T-shirt until I finally actually picked up an EMS turnout coat I found. That's what I did. Actually the only thing I did have -- no, yes, that's about it. That's about it. Yes.

Q. Any thoughts or comments or opinions you would like to add about the morning?

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A. About this? It was -- at the time I just -- adrenaline was so high. I just -- I just did what I -- like I was -- like I'm not sure what guided me to do what I did. I don't know what kept me from -- maybe seeing that Chief is what kept me from going into the building, maybe not having my equipment on. I don't know. Maybe I wouldn't have done it even then. But like I said, I was there at quarter to eight in the morning on Fulton Street. So who knows. I don't know. But I did the best I could. That's all I could say. I wish I could have done more but I did what I could do at the time.

Q. Okay, thank you.

A. No problem.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0902. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110149

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MICHAEL MEJIAS

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. MEJIAS

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0917 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Specialist Michael Mejias, badge 5737.

Battalion 4, Station 11.

Q. We are conducting the interview in the office of the Division 1 conference room, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Michael, if you would --

A. All right. My partner and I were driving along South Street getting pretty close to the station. It was around maybe 8:45 to 8:50, when I noticed that a wave of ambulances and EMS crews and ESU and PD and Fire Department are racing down South Street to go to the downtown area. Said to my partner that that has got to be an awesome job, downtown somewhere, big job.

Then as we continue on, we were only like a block away from the station, I see people looking up in the sky. Finally my curiosity gets to me. I told my partner stop the car, because we drove in together. Stop the car, stop the car. I got to look. I get out and I see the World Trade Center with a gigantic black

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hole in the building, on fire. So I go to my partner, Jody, Joe, let's run. We run into the Battalion 4 station. I said Jody, this is a big job. We got to go, go, go, go. We got an the adrenaline rush and by that time, Battalion 4, my supervisor, Bill Melarango, says get changed, get changed, grab a radio, go sign a radio, grab a bus, go, go, go, go.

We go upstairs to change. My partner, he was already in uniform because he was driving in with his uniform. He already grabbed his bags. He went downstairs from the locker room. I was getting changed, I grabbed my stuff and I ran down there. I grabbed vehicle 240 and a radio. I proceeded down there. My partner had already left because they sent him with another extra person that was standing by. He got changed before I did.

I got into vehicle 240. I raced down there behind, with my supervisor, he was in the command car behind me and I stopped on Broadway and Fulton was my first stop. I had -- there were people coming on to me in hysteria, and I remember there was one lady who was hysterical and I just grabbed her and I told her listen ma'am, you got to be calm for me, you got to be strong for me. What is happening here is a really horrendous



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thing, I don't got time to deal with you right now. We got a lot of seriously hurt patients. She was with her girlfriend. She goes yes, I understand that. She said just go save somebody. I told her and her girlfriend to walk towards north. Get out of the way.

Then there was a crowd of people there on Fulton and Broadway, and I was screaming at them, listen, get out of the way, go to north, go north. A lot of shrapnel and a lot of stuff going on there. Things falling off the building, I didn't want anybody to get hurt. Then this other lady comes up to me and she just looks at me and she said I have dust in my eye. Could you look at my eye. I told her listen, can you see me. She says yes. I said listen, your eyes are fine. I put a green tag on her, triage tag, and I told her Beekman Hospital is two blocks away. Just walk straight down Fulton Street and seek help there. I gave her a little 4 by 4. She had a little cut on her finger.

Then this kid comes up to me. He is around 20 something years old. He said he is an Army medic and that he wants to help and I didn't have a partner at the time so I took off my hat and I said you are my partner now. I gave him my EMS hat. We both got into

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the ambulance together. We road up Fulton to Vesey and as we are driving up Vesey past the Trade Center we see a severed leg. We run over that severed leg and I stopped at West Street.

When I stop at West Street and Vesey, there was a Lieutenant there who was setting up the staging I guess for the ambulances. He said let's move the ambulance towards the water. He just probably saved me. I don't even know his name, but I would recognize his face. He said move the ambulance towards the water and I parked it in between West Street on Vesey and North End.

My partner had already set up a triage, triage center by the World Financial Center there, on the side, by Vesey. So we had like three or four or 5, maybe 5 patients. Two of them were walking wounded. I think 2 or 3 of them were burned, second degree burns.

As we are working up the patients and we are trying to get organized, there is rumors that there is a second plane coming. I thought nothing of it because you go on jobs, sometimes you get hysteria, people thinking there's more than what is going on. Shortly after that, the second plane came. I hear a big rush, like a low flying jet and I see a massive explosion.

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Now I'm getting a little nervous because now I know it's not an accident. Now I know that the first plane was deliberate and the second plane is deliberate. Now we got a problem.

So I'm thinking to get these patients out of there. The nurses in the triage area by the World Financial Center, there was nurses over there. I didn't even know where they came from. They must have come from the buildings that have nursing clinics. Some of these buildings downtown, they have nursing clinics in the centers there.

Q. Excuse me, this was in front of the American Express building?

A. Yes. Right on the side of Vesey, North End, World Financial, whatever it is, in the middle of the block. There was ambulances parked and we had no officer to give direction at the time, because it was like we were trying to organize. So I was the senior guy there at the time. My partner was there with me and another guy from station 13. I forget his name. He told me that you guys interviewed him already. He was there.

There was an ambulance crew in an ambulance and I grabbed the crew and I said listen, we got to get

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these people out of here. It's dangerous. So we put the lady who was burned in the stretcher, put her in the ambulance. Then I had the guy that was burned on his back, put him in the stair chair, wheeled him over to the ambulance and told him listen, I know it's going -- you are going to have to sit, sir. I know it's going to be painful for you but I got to get you out of here. It's not safe. He goes no, that's all right, guy. Get me out of here, get me out of here.

So I put him in the ambulance. The lady was in the stretcher. Her husband was a walking wounded, I sent him and then there was another two, I don't -- can't remember. All of them had triage tags. I told the crew listen, don't even worry about an ACR. They got triage tags, get them out of here. Take them to Cornell. That's what I was thinking, ship them to Cornell, but they didn't listen to me. They took them to somewhere like St. Vinny's or somewhere, because with a thing like that, forget about the burn. You have to get as many patients as you can out.

Then as we are trying to get this other lady, who was HYS, you know, she was in the stair chair, I'm trying to calm her down. I was waiting to get another ambulance to get her out of here, but she was on

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delayed status because she was just HYS, there was nothing really wrong with her. She was hysterical like the rest of us, you know.

The building started collapsing, the north tower started collapsing. It tipped down first and then the thing fell within itself. It was an amazing sight to see. It was really unbelievable. I thought I was watching a movie with special effects.

Then from there people were rushing towards us. We ran all the way towards the water, as far to the water as we could go, on Vesey past North End towards the water where the park is. It was like a mushroom cloud of dust and debris coming towards us and everything. But it didn't really -- we were safe because we were surrounded by other buildings. If the tower would have fell towards West Street instead of imploding on itself, we would have had a problem, but, you know, it just came within itself, just tipped.

We waited there till things calmed down. There were a lot of firemen coming towards us with eye problems, like irritating of their eyes, irritation of their eyes. We were throwing water all over them, trying to irrigate their eyes. Trying to clean them up best we could. Nobody really seriously -- serious

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trauma, but there was one guy, he had a real bloody nose. We cleaned him up best we could.

There was equipment strewn all over the place because everybody was running. EMS equipment. So we had a stretcher, I don't know whose stretcher it was. We grabbed the stretcher, told my partner, listen, we got to get back in the game, man. So we loaded the stretcher with all the equipment that we could find. My bus, 240, was parked on North End, right behind the logistics truck, Alan Cruz, our supply truck, and I was heading back to my ambulance because I was going to put the stuff back, but they told us to go to the hotel on North End, I forget, Embassy Suites, I think it is?

Q. Yes.

A. They already set up a triage there. So we brought all the equipment that we had, that we found, over there. Shortly after we get there, they want to evacuate us out of there, because they are worried about gas leaks, they are worried about integrity of buildings, you know, because the front of the building by the movie theater, that little space there was on fire. So now they were worried about gas leaks and all the other stuff.

We evacuate, we go to Stuyvesant, Stuyvesant

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High School from there. I don't know even know what street that's on. Chambers, it's a little side street, but it's not Chambers, it's a different name. Anyway, where Stuyvesant High School is. I don't know where that is.

Q. Okay.

A. So we go over there. We evacuate all the patients that we have there, we have like walking wounded in the area. Only a few. We got them out of there, out of that hotel. We grabbed as much equipment as we could. We evacuated and walked down to Stuyvesant. We loaded as much as we could on ambulances and walked down. They were setting up triage there. I didn't even go in. I stayed right there outside. Then they started saying there is a gas leak over there and they are worried about something happening over there.

Finally they make a decision to evacuate all the emergency personnel to Chelsea, but my ambulance is still on North End and Vesey. So I give my keys to the equipment truck guy, Allan Cruz, because he was gathering up all the ambulances, because we had all the equipment now in front of Stuyvesant High School. So I gave him the wrong set of keys. He didn't have the

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ignition key.

So he came back and said Mike, you gave me the wrong set. I said okay, I will get the bus. So I ran back in. It was like inches of soot, it looked like snow. It was incredible. I went back there and I grabbed the ambulance. It was still in good shape. Didn't get hit with any debris. I went back and I carted as much stuff as I could. I still have this kid with me now. He was with me, me and my partner, then we put all the stuff in the -- Chief Carrasquillo told us to go to Chelsea.

Put as much equipment as we had in there and as we are driving up West Street to go to Chelsea, we are picking up all kinds of medical personnel who were walking, because everybody got evacuated to there, so we could set up a staging and a triage and a MASH unit, which they did an awesome job. It was incredible. I don't know if you were there.

Q. No.

A. It was awesome. I was in the military as an Army combat medic, not war time, but I had training in that. It reminded me, everything was perfect man. It was like a MASH unit set up in there, in like a warehouse. We had ambulances lined up in rows and we



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were all waiting for that call to go down there to save some lives and that call never came.

That was the most saddest thing about it, that with a job this size, this magnitude, I was saying to myself there is going to be numerous injured and we are going to have to really depend on our skills. Not a call. So that was the biggest thing. So I waited and waited and waited, me and my partner and this kid.

Finally I told the kid, I said listen, there is nothing you can do here. It's already done. Me and my partner go thanks, guy, thanks for coming in. He left and we brought the equipment that we had in the ambulance, we brought it in to the triage, the MASH unit that they had, because they might need equipment. So we just kept our base equipment for the bus.

That was it. I ran out of gas so what I did was I told the Lieutenant, listen, I'm going to be going to -- I'm going to get gas. He said when you get gas, go to 911, go back to the 911 system, because there was no patients. Then, you know, I will admit I cheated a little bit.

When I went out getting gas, I went down to Whitehall Street, because I knew they were setting up a MASH unit there and I wanted to be where the patients

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were. We waited there. The Lieutenant said I need you, come in here. We went there. We stayed there another eight hours, waiting and waiting and waiting for patients. No show. It was like -- I think that was the toughest thing, is that a job that magnitude you would expect thousands and thousands of patients. After the first wave, nothing. There were no survivors.

That's about it. I probably missed a few things. There was a package, when I -- this is like a funny story about this job too. There was a package that when I came back to the ambulance with all the equipment, it was open, my ambulance. I had both keys. I said, what's this package here doing in my ambulance? After all the building collapses and everything else, I didn't even think about it again.

I put the equipment in there. We went to the hotel and then we went to Stuyvesant, then we went up to Chelsea is when I realized. I said there is a package, I don't know how it got there. So I took it out. Now I'm getting a little nervous. That's what I was just -- relax. It's not an ordinary Tuesday any more, so paranoia set in. Because at the time I really didn't think about it because there was such chaos.

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So I go to my partner and I go Jody man, there is a box, I had both keys and this box was found in my ambulance. What should I do with it. He goes get that out of here. What are you, crazy man. So I was going to throw it in the garbage can, but I said that's unsafe because what if somebody came and left another device.

So what I did I put it in the island on West Street at Chelsea, and I flagged down a PD and the FBI and I told them and they had the bomb squad check it out. It wound up being a wedding present or something. It was addressed to Norway, but there was nothing we could have done about that, you know. It was chaotic there. You started thinking about things that might possibly happen. (inaudible) just waited.

Q. Okay. When you got to Broadway and Fulton, who was the supervisor? You said that he moved you over?

A. On Broadway and Fulton, my supervisor was behind me. He left, he went towards the building somewhere. I don't know even know where he went to be honest with you.

Q. Who was it?

A. Bill Melarango. He was behind me in the

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command car. He did his administrative stuff. I don't know where he went. I was there with me and this kid after. When I got to West Street, West Street and Vesey is when the supervisor, I don't know who he was. I seen him before. I don't know his name, but he might have saved my life, because I was parked at West Street and he told me listen, I want you to move that ambulance towards the water.

Q. Right, right.

A. So that's when I went from West Street and Vesey to North End where the supply truck was. I parked behind there and I walked to the triage area in the middle of the block. There was already ambulances set up on Vesey between North End and West Street, right in front of the movie theater, you know the movie theater.

Q. Yes.

A. Right over there by the -- in the middle of the block. So I grabbed an EMS crew and we got rid of the patients that were happening over --

Q. The crew that you helped with the burn patients --

A. I see them before, but I don't know their names, but when I see them I'm going to give them a

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good hug tight, because they got those people out of there.

Q. Do you remember their vehicle number or anything like that?

A. You know, I seen them before, I don't know if they were from Queens or Brooklyn or 15. One of them had a -- the older guy, he is a veteran because I have seen him before. He wears glasses and he has like a lazy eye that goes with (inaudible). His partner is a short guy, an Italian guy. I seen them, I know that they are both veterans. But I don't really know their names. They are not really from my station. But when I see them I'm going to congratulate them. They did an awesome -- they got those patients out of there and that's the main objective.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments on the day that --

A. I remember, this is where I -- as you notice that nobody from our station, Battalion 4, got killed. Seriously, we should have lost half our people, because we are taught, when the job, when the World Trade Center job comes over, it gives you a whole bunch of pages on where to set up, what to do, have you ever seen --

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Q. Yes. Pre-plans.

A. The pre-plans. The pre-plans always say go to the concourse to the triage. Because we were the first wave and we got so many patients, that technically you are supposed to do triage and the patients had to wait until you get them out of there. But we got such a big wave of patients, we were taking them to the hospital, weren't really doing what we were supposed to be doing, triage, and setting up. That's what saved our lives believe it or not, in my opinion.

Because technically we were supposed to set up triage, no patients get transported until we triage them out. Then we go to the concourse and set up triage there and then we would go to various levels, after we get organized, go to various levels of triage on various floors. Because we didn't have a chance to organize because of the attack, because it turned out to be an attack instead of an accident, you know, that's what saved us. By the grace of God, I think that's what saved us, that we didn't really have a chance to organize.

It was so chaotic and debris all over the place. Because I know -- my own set-up would probably be in the building too. You know, so I think that's

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what happened. It was a fuck up, but it really was -- it saved our lives, this little miscue. We didn't really go procedure wise. That's why we were saved. Some rules are meant to be bent, broken, right.

Q. Yes.

A. That's about it. I'm just glad everybody survived. I get a little teary-eyed when I see all these funerals, all these people, they have young kids. It's amazing, but that was about it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. I will first thank you for your time. The time is now 0936 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110151

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ALEXANDER LOUTSKY

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



A. LOUTSKY

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0632 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. EMT Alexander Loutsky of Battalion 4.

Q. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Alex, begin with when you were assigned to the job or --

A. Okay, well, what happened was I had just exchanged vehicles at Battalion 4 around, a little after 8:30 and I was in vehicle -- I was reassigned to vehicle 219. As I was going back to my area, which is a few blocks from the World Trade Center, I was talking with my partner, Hank Ramos, and saw in front of me while we were about, I would say around Pearl Street, we had a view of the World Trade Center, which was only a few blocks away and I stopped him and I said to look at that plane, that it was flying extremely low and that it looked like it was about to hit. A few seconds later it did hit.

After that, we were both kind of shaken up. I picked up the radio and I transmitted a priority signal to let them know that it was an EMS confirmation

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that a plane had in fact hit the World Trade Center. After that, the dispatcher acknowledged it, but the radio then became flooded with so many different signals that we weren't able to really let him know we were headed there.

We were just a couple of blocks from there, so we did, we headed there and we were -- we went to Church and Fulton Street, which was right by the Millennium Hotel. We actually were right by -- actually, originally I should say we were more close to the St. Pauls cemetery, we were parked right there.

When we got there, we noticed that there was a great number of people that were streaming out of the World Trade Center. They looked terrified. They were panicked. Some of them had various degrees of injuries. Many of them were just running wounded, as it were, but they had varying degrees of injuries, but they were running, so forth and so on. We were basically inundated.

We couldn't radio -- I was operating the vehicle that day, so I was supposed to be making the radio transmissions and I just found it impossible to do it because it was just -- inundated, just jammed with so many signals that I wasn't able to. We had so

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many victims that came up to us that -- some of them my partner was attending to, others I tried to make an attempt; however, it was a vain attempt at having a triage and trying to line them up and tag them.

There were just too many of them and many of them were asking questions and some of them were in such shock that their questions seemed, you know, just a waste of time. Like should I go back in and get my wife or something like that. We tried our best that way.

Then what happened is the second unit came behind us, I believe it was 2 Boy. It was David Timothy and I can't recall offhand who he was working with, oh, Jai Zion. I believe he resigned. They then came and together we tried to do the same thing. Then at that point, a fire truck came through and we started -- then we started to realize that with the amount of people swelling, that the area was going to become difficult for further emergency resources to get through. So we tried to make room and so forth and so on.

Then I guess just about that time, if my memory serves me, it was Lieutenant D'Avila, he came on the scene and we were able to at least have some

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semblance of a command. When that occurred, he had ordered us to go -- to proceed with him to West Street, really in between Vesey and Liberty, more like where 1 World Trade Center was. We had a number of victims who became our patients, and we were successfully tagging them and I would say less than 10 at the time, you know. Many people were just running with their injuries. The ones that were willing to receive help, you know, probably had, for whatever reason, they took our help.

At any rate, what happened at this time was we were trying -- Lieutenant D'Avila said that our -- 01 Charlie, which was our unit, that my partner and myself were staging officers and that we were to focus solely on that and not to get sidetracked by other things. So we did that.

Our duties separately were to try to help get the people in ambulances and out of there and to try to get the ones that were -- had injuries that were not so life threatening, to get them out of the borough so that they don't inundate hospitals and to do the best we can in terms of getting names or what ambulances went where and so forth and so on.

Around that time, I didn't at the time

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realize it, but from where we were at, which was right in front of the World Trade Center on the West Side Highway area, there was an explosion and a lot of debris started coming down. Apparently that was the second plane that hit. We lost all of our patients in terms of them running away. They -- the noise and the debris scared them all away and they ran off. We didn't have any left.

We went into our vehicle and Lieutenant D'Avila went into the command vehicle and we started proceeding towards the direction of Liberty in our ambulance and there was a tremendous amount of debris coming down in that area. We just took a turn up Liberty this way to do a U turn, because this was like destroyed.

Q. Okay. Towards the Hudson.

A. Right, so a lot of things were raining down. We knew we had to get out of there. We turned around and we went back on the West Side Highway, made a right turn on Vesey and then made a right turn on Fulton and Church and we were at the Millennium Hotel area once again.

There we were under -- we had more resources, more emergency medical command resources arrived and we

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were still functioning as staging officers as Lieutenant D'Avila directed us to be and it seemed like that was going very successfully in terms of evacuating people out of there. In front of the Millennium Hotel, that became a triage area. It was effective. It was -- people were tagged, it seemed very organized. It was good because there was so many people, so many people coming out of there, and some of them weren't able to ambulate, so they were being carried out, so forth and so on, so we were able to assist in that way. So I assisted numerous times, helping people, like taking them from civilians, so forth and so on.

I did what I was instructed to do in terms of trying to get people that were at least the least amount of injuries out of the borough. We had a number of ambulances and we tried as best we could to put as many people as we can, as possible, without causing any kind of danger to them or anyone else. So we were successful in trying to get a maximum of 6 patients per ambulance. The more severe cases, you know, like the burns, the third degree burns and so forth that went to Cornell, we tried to keep patients of that kind, of that condition, together, or if they weren't burns, at least something that was -- that needed a trauma center

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or something like that.

We did that. I only had a little confusing time when I had certain -- you know, I had my instructions given to me from Lieutenant D'Avila, but there were at times, I was sidetracked by various Captains that were trying to give me different orders that were -- a few things that kind of sidetracked me and I didn't think it made entirely enough sense, but I tried the best I could to obey it.

But it was very crazy there at the time. Like one of them wanted me to get every single patient's name and it just was not possible. There was so much screaming and it just seemed like the worst question to ask in the middle of an ambulance while people are suffering and screaming. It just didn't work out that way.

I did my best you know, in terms of that. But I, you know, I just continued to do and keep my focus as Lieutenant D'Avila told me to do, just to focus on what I was doing, because I know that if I started getting sidetracked, then nothing was going to get accomplished, so that's why I just stayed stuck with what I was doing.

So then actually, right around that time when

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I had that little confusion in my mind because I was told to do something that just didn't seem to -- it just seemed like certain brass in my mind was like -- maybe they just had, like they really didn't have much street time or something. If you don't mind me saying that. They were like in an office so much and then they are asking me with their authority to do something that's not going to be productive, but I can't question it, but do you know what I mean?

Q. Yes.

A. So I was in that little quandary at the time, because I'm saying well how -- I'm trying to get the names, but the person is screaming in agony and they want to get them out of there. Then another person is screaming. I can't even hear them, you know. I'm trying to comply with this, you know, but what was mostly more important was evacuating them, getting them treated and transported out of there. Because even though I didn't, and I didn't think that anybody thought that the buildings were going to collapse, we knew it was not a safe scene. There was debris. There was all kinds of things that could possibly happen.

We knew we weren't necessarily in the hot zone, but we were in the wrong zone. So the risks



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increase. So we just wanted to, you know, rather than deliberate too much on one thing like that, but anyway, at any rate, I -- at that time, I heard a rumble, you know, and then it was, you know, really like, almost like an earthquake.

Then what happened was I heard people screaming and running and then it seemed like they were going to -- it was like going to be a trampling. It was just like bedlam. Of the patients that we had that had any ability to ambulate or maybe didn't think they did, had, then had the ability to.

Q. Found it.

A. Then I started to run for safety too, because I looked up and I saw that the building was going to come down. We were right across the street from it, you know, so I -- at first I -- there was so many people, I thought they were going to trample me, that I went by the Millennium Hotel, there is like a driveway with one of those automatic lifting gates, steel gates that roll up.

I went there. There was a cop there, he was kneeling down, looking, trying to get cover and I was above him and I said there is no security here. There is no place to go, you know. I was under a truck for a

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second or two, because, well, I ducked down, you know, because there was so many people and there was -- they were just going to roll, you know, trod me.

So what happened was I -- suddenly, I was near that garage area, the sky as it blacks out, and then all of a sudden, it just came down. There was no place to go. There was nothing you could do. You were just thoroughly overcome by the particulate matter. It just went totally black. You no longer heard anything. It was like your fingers were in your ear, everything was just numbed out. There was so much particulate matter that it covered every orifice. You couldn't take a breath in. You couldn't see. You couldn't anything.

I was just kind of like putting my hand out and I didn't even know where -- I didn't know exactly which direction I was facing any more. I didn't know if I was -- I knew that I was on -- I knew that I was on Fulton Street, just off of Church, because I ran up to like here, right on the side of the Millennium Hotel, across the street from St. Pauls cemetery. But I didn't know if I was facing the cemetery. I didn't know if I was facing the Millennium Hotel. I didn't know if I was facing Church. I didn't know if I was

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facing Broadway. I was totally blind and discoordinated in that and I couldn't hear anything.

More importantly, I couldn't breathe at all. I was kind of panicky about that. Then I thought maybe if I dug a hole in the cemetery and put my head in it or something. Or if I -- I didn't know what to do. I was very scared, because I knew I was going to die at that point. There was nothing, you know, I thought and I had some thoughts like I thought well, what if this is biological now or rather chemical. What if this is a bomb actually that went off after the plane crashed and now maybe there is something chemical. Then I said well, maybe the heat would have destroyed it.

But that was real quick thoughts but it never really stayed with me because I was panicking, I was starting to panic and I didn't want to panic because I figured then I wouldn't have a chance, but then I thought I didn't have a chance anyway, because there was -- this particulate matter that was just causing total blackness and you couldn't even use any of your senses or breathe, wasn't going to settle, wasn't going to settle quick enough for me to catch a breath, so I kind of like realized that that was the situation, but it was hard for me to accept it entirely.

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So I kind of like was feeling around me and I was using my radio and I was banging around, and I was banging around. I knew when I touched a solid material, but because the particulate matter was so thick I didn't know what the matter was. I didn't know if it was concrete, wood or what, but what I did do and I hit it with my radio, was I heard glass crack, so I put my hand inside and then I put my head in and it turned out to be a van, which I didn't know fully at the time, but I figured it was a vehicle of some kind, because I felt a chair and stuff like that.

So I put my head and half my body and I kind of went in and my head was down at the bottom and I was -- I had it covered with my jacket, but still the particulate matter was so dense and the pressure, as soon as the window was open it pushed it in, but it gave me enough where I just calmed myself and just told myself to just don't be greedy and take short breaths. I was under there and I was just taking short breaths, short breaths, and calm down so you don't require so much. It was hard to do that though, but I tried my best, you know.

It worked. The particulate matter was settling a little bit. I mean it was like a fog and I

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started getting out of there. I came out, I was half in the vehicle. I came out of it and I could see now that it was a van and I could see Broadway, but everything was like a dense fog but I could know that that's where I was. I knew the hospital was down, a couple blocks down from there. So I started in that direction.

I still couldn't breathe well, you know, because the particulate matter was still there, but I could see and I could take short breaths and I would cough a lot and stuff like that, but I tried my best and it did work and I got to the hospital, they gave me oxygen where I was standing and then they cleaned me up in the sink. They put my head in there and they took a pulse-ox of me while I was standing and stuff and you know, cleaned my face because it all caked and stuff like that.

Then after that it was just -- a few minutes went by and I told them I'm done and I have to go back. They told me to stay and I said no, I told them I was fine, but I wanted to go back because I felt like I might have abandoned my post. I got my partner there and that was where I belonged. So I started going back, you know, and I was coughing and hacking a lot,

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but it didn't matter because I felt a lot better. I was just, you know, getting it out.

So I went back and when I got back, I saw on Broadway, some of us were there. I saw men with Lieutenant D'Avila. He was getting -- jumped on me and hugging me and crying and everything. So I asked him where my partner was, where Eric is and they didn't know, you know.

So I went back and that was on -- where I met them was on Fulton Street and Broadway, right here, so I just went back here where I was and I saw that it was -- it had collapsed, the north tower had collapsed. My ambulance was right over there.

It was in flames and I met a firefighter there, Alex Santoro, and this police officer, I don't remember his name, and the three of us were, you know, we had gone through it. I didn't know they did. They didn't know I did. We wanted to try to find our people. I said where is my partner and the cop said I don't know where my partner is and stuff like that.

So we decided to stick together rather than separate and try to see who could find anybody, you know, in this mess -- especially our people. So that's what we did. Then we were like right around here on

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Dey Street, like right here.

Q. Dey and Church?

A. Right, right across the street from the south tower and then the south tower, we heard a rumble and we didn't even look. We ran, okay. We ran. I tell you my legs were sore for three days after that, just that jog that I took. We ran from here, which is on Church Street and Dey. Okay. Right across the street was where the south tower was.

So we were on, on Church and Dey Street, right here, right across the street, again, from the World Trade and when we heard that rumble, we didn't even look. It was like instinct, the three of us, without even looking at each other, just the beginnings of that rumble, we just sprinted out of there and we actually made it up Dey Street. We crossed Broadway and there was right in here a little chocolate candy store, okay. Now there is no way you can beat that thing when it collapses. There is no way at all. That I can tell you. So when we heard that rumble, that thing came down and the whole thing went black the second we went into that candy store.

We slammed the door and as we slammed the door all of the particulate matter with the pressure

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that it had was billowing inside that chocolate store, but not enough to overcome us, you know and we were in there.

We didn't know -- at this point there was a radio going on at this time. I remember it saying the Palestinians are taking responsibility for this. I don't know how accurate at that time that was, but it came off of that AM radio so we were kind of like looking at each other and -- I mean we didn't know what to make of it. We thought that maybe we were at war. Definitely we were at war, you know. I thought we were at war, because I didn't think that the plane to my knowledge, from what I understood, that the plane was enough to do that, you know.

I thought we were at war. I didn't know if there was going to be any chemical stuff being used. I didn't have any -- I felt ill equipped in that respect. I didn't feel that I had anything to protect me with respect to that.

We just decided that what we were going to do was -- we reaffirmed the fact that we were going to stick together, the three of us. We didn't know what was going on. We didn't know if we were going to get out of there. We didn't know that necessarily the



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World Trade Center was fully collapsed or if it was going to collapse in the fashion that we now know it did, because there was an (inaudible) open. Might have fallen over.

Q. Toppled.

A. It was tall enough to crush where we were at without a doubt. So we were safe from the particulate matter, but we didn't feel safe in terms of us going to get crushed.

We put that aside and Alex Santoro, the firefighter, he said well, Alex, let's just start saving up water, because the water main is going to go probably, more than likely. Because of the situation, they may shut them down.

So I started to -- because it was a candy store, the old chocolate, big chocolate, you know, and it had these big glass jars, I started emptying them out, the chocolates put in a pile because we might use that as food too. I take the canister and clean it out and start filling it with water and then the other Alex, the firefighter, he would seal it with plastic, so he sealed the tops. That's what we were doing, because we didn't know how long we would be there, la-la-la, so that's what we did.

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We did that for a while. Seemed like a while. I got this -- I had a cellphone then that I had just got like two days before. I thought well, let me see if I can call somebody and see if anybody is around. If it's more extensive than we think, if I could give a message to my mother or my family or something like that. I couldn't get through. I tried a few numbers. One of them actually went through. It was an answering machine and I left a message on the answering machine, you know. It was a friend's friend that I really didn't know too well, but I left a message, you know, the last will and testament kind of thing, as if in fact they weren't going to be affected by it. So I did that.

Then afterwards -- the cop was saying stay away from the doors, because if there is any frantic police officers out there they'll use their guns, so I remember that. Then I think there was also some civilians that we were able to get inside that were, you know, straggling, one or two of them. Couldn't breathe out there, and we wanted to get them in, but we had to do it quick, because the minute you opened that door, the whole thing would get filled, flooded.

So anyway, we did that for a while and then

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as the thing started to settle, outside looked foggier instead of black. So we all decided let's go out and let's go find survivors. You know, so that's what we did. We started on -- let's see -- where did we go? I don't think -- yes, we were on John, but did we go down John. Yes, we went down John Street and every building side to side, we would go to. We tried to get in and see if there were any survivors and we found that there were quite a few buildings where people were hiding in the basements. We asked them if they had water or access to water.

Me and Alex, we got big pipes that we had used, that if we needed to break into storage to get water, or food or at least have access to so they could get to it. Because at this point where we are at, it was such destruction and what we experienced was so horrific, we didn't know that we were at war and it was more prolific. We certainly were acting in a way that I think was sound and Alex led us in that respect, because we wanted to make sure that the survivors, you know, had water and so forth and so on.

That's what we did. We went from building to building, going all the way down John Street. As we went down John Street, at some point we reached Water

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Street. At Water Street, things started to look less horrific and there was more people, you know, emergency personnel, and there was Chief Vlicharz. He is a Battalion Chief at Engine 4 on Duane and Broadway, our area, where 1 Charley is from.

He said to me -- he knew me and he said to me that I should go right away to Engine 7, which is on South Street and Old Slip. That's about 5 or 7 blocks from where I met him and to go register there, because I'm missing and presumed dead. He said go over there and register there so they know that you are all right. Okay.

Then he -- after that, I was supposed to go with a firefighter and we were supposed to go back to the World Trade Center and help get people out of there, you know. So I went to the fire house, my radio wasn't working all this time, by the way. So I went to the fire house, I registered over there in the logbook and the Captain is there and he asked my name verbally again and so forth. Okay, don't worry about it. He says, okay now. Go back to the World Trade Center and go help out over there.

So I wasn't entirely sure what I was supposed to do, because I didn't know -- I didn't see anybody

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from my unit. I didn't see anybody that was -- I saw Chief Vlicharz. I didn't know where everybody else was. It just seemed a natural thing was to just follow direction from the Fire Department personnel, you know, and I -- they couldn't tell me where EMS was at the time. It was too crazy at the time and everybody was absorbed in their duties, which is understandable.

So I started signing in and talking to the Captain as I say. Then my radio was working. I heard a command center at the ferry terminal was talking to someone else. I'm touching the radio you know, trying to hear better and putting it louder and stuff like that. So I told the Captain listen, it sounds like they have a command center at South Street ferry terminal, which is not far. The Chief directed me to go to the World Trade Center with him.

Is it all right if I'm relieved of that so I can go and seek out, you know, my command. He says yes, go ahead. So I went and I went to the ferry terminal. I met up -- there was a couple of Chiefs out there. They just told me to direct, to help direct civilians that were being evacuated at this point. I believe the city was -- Mayor had made a directive to that effect I believe.

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What I was supposed to do is direct them to -- so I was directing them into various ferries. They had ferries going to Brooklyn, they had ferries going to Staten Island, ferries going to New Jersey and so forth and I was helping direct them. I did that for a number of hours, just getting them you know, where they are supposed to be going, so I assisted in that.

After hours of doing that, it became night fall and I was upstairs helping them in the triage area. Then I guess after -- I was almost there for 16 hours. Then there really wasn't anybody left in terms of victims. It just seemed like at that point we were saying that well, it looks like you are either dead or you are a walking wounded kind of thing. So I was told by a supervisor that since I live in Staten Island, just a boat ride away, just go home, refresh yourself and come back in the morning.

That's what I did. I went home after 16 hours. I tried to sleep, I couldn't sleep. I actually came back 3 hours later because I was very hypersensitive to sounds [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A. LOUTSKY

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] They dissipated over  
time.

Basically that's the story.

Q. Do you remember where -- when you saw the first plane go in, do you remember what streets you were on when you saw?

A. Yes, I saw exactly where I was in my mind, but I'm trying to tell you the name of it. It is --

Q. Off the map?

A. Yes, it's right in this white area. But I will tell you, it was City Hall park, like right around -- I would call it -- right by the Brooklyn Bridge and Pearl Street.

Q. Okay.

A. Right around the Brooklyn Bridge and Pearl Street. You got a view of it. It's like right in front of you. I'm sitting at the light and he is talking to me and I'm saying right, right, wo, look at that. It's going to hit. It's going to hit and that's when it hit.

Q. When you first came into Fulton and Church, coming down Fulton, from down Church --

A. No, I came -- what I did was -- let's see,

A. LOUTSKY

Pearl, went down -- sorry, went down by the Brooklyn  
-- where is the Brooklyn Bridge here?

Q. Brooklyn Bridge would be up about here.

A. Really. Let's see.

Q. This is the top edge.

A. At any rate, I will just say this. I came  
from Fulton Street. I went from Fulton Street, from  
where the Brooklyn Bridge would be here. I went down  
like this and went down like that. That's how I did  
it.

Q. That's westbound on Fulton.

A. Right.

Q. All right.

A. Is this westbound? Yes, you are right.

Forgive me. Yes, this is westbound.

Q. Put a number there. This is your first stop?

A. Right. I was actually parked right inside  
here.

Q. Inside of Fulton Street?

A. Right over here we were parked, right here.

Then we moved it over here.

Q. Right. When you got around to -- in front of  
1 World Trade Center, it was you -- 2 Boy, I think it  
was, you said, 2 Adam?



A. LOUTSKY

A. No, 2 Boy came here.

Q. Did they follow you around to --

A. I don't recall, I don't recall, I suspect, but I can't say for sure. I kind of was like -- we were very close to the Lieutenant at that point and I think most of the -- I don't recall seeing them, but I don't recall, sorry.

Q. No problem. When you came around to West Side Highway, do you recall aside from the Lieutenant, any other EMS units there?

A. Well yes, there was a couple of paramedic units that came from hospital vollies. I recall a couple of Fire Department units there. I don't remember their designations. There was Lieutenant D'Avila and there was a Chief that came and there was some Lieutenants, Chief or something like that there, you know, that came, that were in that area with us. We had our patients right over here. Here.

Q. Right.

A. We were sitting down -- like over here, you don't see it in this picture, but over here, there is like a big wall that separates from World Trade Center, you know.

Q. Right.

A. LOUTSKY

A. Like that.

Q. Yes.

A. It was very protected because it was like an overhang, so nothing could affect anybody from that -- from that -- you know, from that. No one thought the building was going to come down, that's the whole thing. That's when it caught everybody in a surprise. I've heard people argue all different things, like what we could have done.

Like -- I think we did very well, in terms of what we were trained to do. I think it worked very well with what our expectations were, because if we knew the building was going to collapse, you would have to be a quarter mile away from that place, because that building was going about a quarter mile high, so how far could you have been. You still would have been in danger, you know. So -- and it's part of our job. We don't want to be injured or killed because we want to be able to assist people, but we are in the warm zone and there is a certain risk involved. That's part of the job.

But I think that we acted with due regard in a sober fashion. I'm very happy. There is a lot to learn I'm sure, and you guys are probably going to

A. LOUTSKY

bring that out. But I think that everything -- I'm glad that Lieutenant D'Avila was there and the others that led us in the right direction, you know. So. That's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay, thank you very much. Time is now 0711 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110152

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS CHIEF RANDALL HIRTH

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

R. HIRTH

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0820 hours and I am conducting an interview with Chief Hirth, Commander, Division 1, EMS, Borough of Manhattan. This interview is being conducted at the Division 1 office.

Q. Chief?

A. All right. We were at the Academy in refresher and the page came over that there was a problem at the World Trade Center. Lieutenant Cacciola was with me and I told her that we really need to respond. We got into the car. Lieutenant Roger Moore came out and requested transportation to go with us, so he jumped in the car with us and we proceeded to respond. We notified Citywide and proceeded to respond to the World Trade Center.

En route there we could see that -- while we were en route a second plane hit the building, but we didn't see that, but we heard it over the radio. But we saw both towers burning. We came down through the Midtown Tunnel down to the FDR Drive and around to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. When I got to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, I decided that we should leave the car there and walk in the rest of the way. I didn't want

R. HIRTH

to block other emergency vehicles, particular fire trucks and everything else. So I left my car at Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and proceeded to walk to the World Trade Center down the West Side Highway.

As soon as we got out of the car and we took our first few steps, we noticed the body parts in the street and I believe that's what we realized that this was going to be ugly. We proceeded to walk down the West Side Highway and we were trying to locate the command post, which was opposite the Trade Centers and in front of the World Financial Center.

We walked up to the command post. That's where we left Lieutenant Roger Moore, at the command post, and Chief Kowalczyk requested that I respond to the north side of the second tower because they were having a lot of problems there and he asked if I could take command of that area over there. I agreed to do that and Lieutenant Cacciola was going with me and she suggested that we make our way, instead of down the West Side Highway, over to the Trade 7 tower because there was stuff coming off the building, debris and some people were still jumping at that point. So we decided to go through the World Financial building, down the corridor, come out the other side and be on

R. HIRTH

the north side of the tower.

En route through there, she also suggested that we call our family members, make a quick phone call so they knew that we were safe, and I thought that was a good idea being that this was going to be an extended operation. So halfway through the corridor we stopped where there was a phone there and I called my wife and told her that she was going to see this on the news but not to worry, that I was safe, and I got off the phone. It was a quick conversation. I didn't have time to talk to her. Then she proceeded to call her mother and her sister.

While she was telling her sister that she was safe, what I perceived to be the building started rumbling, the one we were in, and it was my impression that a third plane hit the building we were in. I had no idea that the first tower was collapsing, which we couldn't see at that point. But we looked down the hall from where we came and we saw the building starting to come down, and it was actually the roof of that building, but we thought the whole building was coming down.

She dropped the phone and we proceeded to run to go out through the corridor into the Winter Garden

R. HIRTH

and try and run out the back way that way, out through the Winter Garden, but when we got down at the end of the hall and into the beginning of the Winter Garden, we saw the whole roof of the Winter Garden coming down and we knew that we couldn't make that an escape route. So we turned around and headed back into the corridor, and that's when it looked like a tidal wave of smoke was coming down the hall and it was just about to engulf us.

So it was my impression at that point that the whole building was going down, that a third plane hit the building, and that we were probably going to be dead at that point. So I just yelled to her to dive into the corner of the hall, that possibly we could have some protection, and she dove into one area and I dove into another area. The rumbling, the building was rumbling, and we thought the whole building was coming down, people were screaming in the hall, the smoke engulfed us, we couldn't see, and there was just a loud rumble, a jet rumbling, alarms started going off and we actually thought we were going to die at that point.

I don't know the time frame, how long that was going on for, but at one point everything went silent except for the alarm, a very, very loud alarm in



R. HIRTH

that building. Then we realized that the part we were in didn't collapse and then I got up and I had no idea where Lieutenant Cacciola was and I started to head back into the collapse here a little bit to see if I could find her, and that's when she yelled that she was behind me and she kept yelling and then I went back and through her voice I found her.

Then I knew we had to get out of there because either it was going to collapse some more or the smoke was going to kill us. So we started to try and figure out a way to get out back this way somehow, through the Winter Garden again, and people were coming by us, they were running hysterical, and someone came by with a flashlight and pointed to go in some direction, and we just kept going in that direction until we saw an opening and then we just climbed through some rubble and wound up outside.

At the point we got outside, I met up with a bunch of EMTs and a lot of people were injured outside, and it was still my impression at that point we were still under attack and a third plane hit our building. I still wasn't aware because when we got outside the whole area was covered with white smoke, thick white smoke that you couldn't see more than five feet in

R. HIRTH

front of you, if that much. I directed a bunch of EMTs to help whoever they could and leave the area and go where it's safe, and I had no idea where that was at that point because I was turned upside-down. I told them, I said, wherever they thought was safe, that's where they needed to go, and try and get these people out of here and that was it. I said they couldn't help anyone else at that point, they had to save themselves and just get whoever could out of there and that was all we could do at that point.

So they started to go and we started to get a few of the injured people up that were laying there. We were telling them they had to get up, even though they're injured, they couldn't stay, that we would have people to help move them and they had to just help themselves and, if they laid there, they probably were going to get killed. So most of them got up and started walking even though they were bleeding and whatever their injuries were, and we pointed the direction which way they should go. There was too many of them for us to treat by ourselves, plus we didn't have equipment at that point. So they left and kept going.

Q. You were sending them north on the West Side

R. HIRTH

Highway?

A. North. We were telling them to go north because we knew we were on this side, the north side of the tower and you couldn't go south. So we were sending them north and figured somewhere they would meet up with responding units coming in and they would receive aid and help. We were going the same way because we had to get out of the smoke because we still couldn't breathe, and I guess we turned, and I'm not positive of this, but maybe on Vesey Street and made our way down to North Avenue. Somewhere in that vicinity we saw a trailer, a parks restoration trailer, that's what I remember reading on the sign, and we saw people in there.

So we knocked on that door and they opened the door and let us in, and there was no smoke in there, so we were able to breathe a little again and they let us wash up, they gave us some water, they let us use the facilities, and then we tried to make some phone calls from there to see if we could get Citywide or whoever, but none of those calls were going through. Then we were able to get through to -- I was able to call my wife again, but for whatever reason, it wasn't letting calls go into Brooklyn. So on those

R. HIRTH

calls, I don't know why, but I was able to call my wife and no one else.

Then someone knocked on that door of the trailer and said the second building was going to collapse and it was probably going to collapse onto this trailer and you had to get out of here or you were going to die. So we came back out and there were scores of people still running north and we just got in with them and we started running with them. I guess we were going north on North Avenue and probably on Murray Street, instead of following the crowd north on North Avenue -- and I'm not positive but I think we turned on Murray and we went down to the driving path or whatever, the walkway on River Terrace, and that's where we watched that whole building collapse and we realized at that point that both towers were down and we thought we were still under attack at that point.

There was a large group of people with us and we started going north again on River Avenue until we came up to the school, and after the school is the West Side Highway to turn and go north again. But what happened at the school was there was a major gas leak coming out of there and PD came to us and said that this building was going to blow up and we had to get

R. HIRTH

everybody out of here, and at that point the school itself started filing out. So you had the large crowd from the North Terrace and then you had all the school emptying out.

So rather than keep going, we decided to help PD, because there was only a few of them, to try and get the school and these people out. At some point across the street there was some gunfire and the people started running back towards us and we knew they couldn't go back that way, so we formed a wall on North Terrace and we were getting almost stampeded but trying to turn these people around to make them go back to West Street, West Side Highway, and go that way. When we finally accomplished that, myself, Grace and the police officers doing this, we were pretty confident that that building was going to blow and we probably were going to get killed at that point again, and it was hard to rationalize that we were going to stand there and wait to get blown up because people didn't want to listen.

But we did that and we finally got everybody turned around and the building didn't blow, and then we went out to West Street and then we made our way up to a little further up West Street, and that's where we

R. HIRTH

turned out of the crowd and went into a golf course where there was a -- next to the golf course there was a ferry dock.

Do you want me to continue on that?

Q. Sure.

A. We were at the golf course. We tried to get our bearings together. I'm pretty sure both of us were pretty much in shock at that point and we tried to figure out what was going on. Then we left the golf course and we worked our way a little bit further west to where the ferry was and we directed people in how to get on the ferry or where the one ferry was docking, to get on and just go wherever it's going and get out of here because some people were a little hesitant. One woman wanted to go back to the Trade Center because she left something in the building and we tried to tell her it wasn't a good idea. We watched people get on the ferry, helped them on the ferries, and then we went into the shop where the guy that supposedly runs the ferry was there and he let us wash up and have a drink. I don't know how long we stayed in there, and that's when we decided do we keep going north or do we go back? We finally decided that we had to go back.

We came out of that shack, we went back to

R. HIRTH

the towers, as close as we could get, and at that point we realized that there was no one there, that anybody that was there was probably dead. There was no one. No one injured, there was no injuries, there was just devastation. There was nobody to help at that point. So we then left the Trade Center again.

This whole time we were out of radio contact with anybody. The radios didn't work, the phones didn't work. So we had no communications. We had no idea what plans were being made. So we decided to head north again on the West Side Highway, and at some point we met up with Captain Stone and Richie Zarrillo. Once we met with them, they had a little more information than we had, that there was a staging area set up at Chelsea Piers, which I guess was another two miles down the road, but at that point, I don't know how many hours we were there at that point, but we were in no shape to walk to the Chelsea Piers.

So we got a police van to turn around and take us. We lucked out because they were under a different direction, but I kind of like commandeered them and they took us to the Chelsea Piers. Again we refreshed ourselves, tried to get our thoughts together and tried to find out exactly what happened.

R. HIRTH

Do you want me to continue with the whole thing?

Q. That's good.

A. Cut off there?

Q. Yes. That covers the period that we're looking at.

A. That's it.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or opinions?

A. Thoughts or opinions. Well, my thoughts are that, which has been since this happened, that both myself and Lieutenant Cacciola along with probably a lot of other people will have a lot of trouble sleeping and stuff, but my thoughts and opinions are that we felt that we were very helpless back at the scene, a building the size of the World Trade Center falling down and you can't do nothing at that point but run, and it was very frustrating that there was no one else after the buildings went down that needed help. Everybody was gone and that was very frustrating.

I don't know. That's it. We were convinced three different occasions inside of probably a two-hour period that we were going to die, once from the first building that we were in, then when the second collapse, then the gas leak. So it's a hard thing to



R. HIRTH

try and do your job and kind of be pretty sure that you were not going to survive. I guess that really messed us up and knowing that we lost everybody that we lost in the Trade Center that we know that didn't come out and we know that they were in there and it was very frustrating that they were in there and there was nothing we could do about it.

I guess there's nothing else to say. It's just that we were very frustrated that we couldn't do more than we did. I guess we were just happy to be alive, but it was a very frustrating experience.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Thank you, chief. The time is now 0836. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110153

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GRACE CACCIOLA

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. CACCIOLA

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 24, 2001.

The time is now 0727 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Grace Cacciola, Lieutenant, Division 1.

Q. This interview is being conducted at the Division 1 office and is regarding the events of the morning of September 11, 2001.

A. I was at the bureau training. I was in refresher. We were on a break when Chief Hirth came in to me at approximately 8:50, between 8:50 and 8:55. He said he was just paged that a plane had hit the towers or one of the towers. We assumed it was a small plane; however, we did think there were going to be numerous patients, only because of the time of the morning and the usual rush hour traffic. He said he was going to call RCC and Citywide to get details, because we may be leaving, being that he was that Division commander. We may be leaving to go help out in Manhattan, to get my stuff ready.

We went and made the phone calls. I went to the car, put everything in the car. PD SOD was chaotic. Citywide was starting with get very busy with air traffic. We got in the car, we called Citywide and

G. CACCIOLA

said they didn't need his response as of yet, but to stand by. Two seconds later, he said you know what, it's my borough, we will go in.

As we are driving out the second tower was hit. We realized at that point this was no little accident. Got into Manhattan. I would say -- actually I didn't look at the history, 15 minutes. We parked by -- actually Roger Moore was in the car with us also. He came with us. He was in refresher with us. It was so it was Chief Hirth and myself and Lieutenant Roger Moore. We parked by the mouth of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We got out of the car, first thing we saw was a severed torso, like 10 feet in front of us. There was a cop guarding the torso.

As we were walking up to the command post, people were still jumping out of the towers. There were body parts and fragments and blood all over the place. Mass chaos. Both towers were still standing at this point. We went over to the command post and at the command post we saw Chief Gombo, Chief Kowalczyk, EMT Richie Zarrillo, Lieutenant Ross Terranova, Chief Ganci, Chief Sal Cassano, and then all aides, chauffeurs and what have you from the fire side.

Chief Gombo asked Chief Hirth to respond to

G. CACCIOLA

the north side of the north tower. They were getting numerous calls for numerous patients on that side. We said okay, we were going. We told them we would leave Roger Moore with them at the command post because Roger has problems walking, with his knees. So we left Roger Moore at the command post.

As we are walking, debris and people were still coming out of the towers so we were hugging the wall on West Street, but across the street from the towers, so we got -- I believe it was 2 Financial Plaza. I was very confused. It has to be 2 Financial Plaza when I look at this. I said to Chief Hirth, my cell phone had gone off, my family was frantic whether we were all right. He said how about we cut through the building. I said really fast just let me call home and tell them I'm all right, because my cell phone wasn't working. He said all right. That's a good idea. This way we were away from the debris. We can come out of 2 Financial Plaza up by Vesey Street. He says it will actually be safer so we aren't in any debris' way.

We walk in. Chief Hirth called his wife really quickly, told her we are here. It's chaos but we are safe. Don't worry about it. Then he handed me

G. CACCIOLA

the phone and I called my sister. As I was on the phone with my sister we heard the rumble. I screamed oh, my god and my sister thought I was dead, because she heard the rumble and the white cloud as the building came down, collapsed into -- again 2 Financial Plaza. We were chased with the white cloud.

We started running and we had to stop at one point because now the whole area filled with black smoke and the Winter Garden atrium collapsed in front of us, because we were going to go into the Winter Garden to cut outside but we couldn't do it, because we had the collapse of the front of 2 Financial Plaza into us and then the atrium coming at us from the other side.

We hit the ground, we just waited. In fact, I'm not sure -- we had a couple of cops with us, we had a couple of firemen. There was a female security guard from the building, and someone from maintenance, a male, from maintenance in the building. Somebody screamed we are just going to die here. Everybody just get on the floor. We got on the floor and it was pitch black and I believe it was Chief Hirth said we can't stay here. Then one of the firefighters screamed we are going to suffocate. We need to move now.

G. CACCIOLA

So we all held hands and we were climbing over the debris and I'm not sure, I think one of them had to have a little flashlight, because we really couldn't see where we were walking. Then the janitor had said I think the back is this way. If we walk this way we will find the back somewhere.

So we walked, and again, time line is so hard. You don't know if it was 2 minutes, because when we got up you actually didn't know what was up, what was down, if you were actually on the floor, on the wall. We finally saw light that led us outside. Once outside, we started treating people because there were people hurt all over the place, covered in the white dust, coughing, cuts, so we started helping out people there.

PD started screaming at us we need to move from here. We need to move. So we started funneling people with us that were hurt. There was a little trailer that they were using to fix the park, you know, they are fixing that whole area, that park.

Q. Right.

A. This was one of their facilities where -- their administrative trailer. So first they locked the door on us and PD ordered them to open the door. We

G. CACCIOLA

got inside. The people in there started cleaning us off and helping us. One of their workers came in totally covered in white soot. We took care of him, when, again, I think it was PD came screaming, we need to move from here. There is a threat of a gas line leak, I think they said at that point.

So we started moving from there. We started funneling people with us that were hurt. We still had all the injured with us. Tower two collapsed.

Everyone started running again. We started having people go toward Battery Park, you know, the pier, right down there by the ferry. We told everybody to start going there. So we are funneling people to run in that direction.

When we got to Stuyvesant High School, PD is now screaming confirmed gas leak. They were letting the kids out of school, kids were all frantic. We helped them evacuate the school. Again we were funneling them on to West Street going north. Then there was a gun shot across the street and supposedly, this is just what we were hearing over the PD radio, somebody had shot out one of the windows and I think it was Manhattan Borough Community -- is that what is directly across the street? I'm so bad. Another



G. CACCIOLA

school across -- directly across the street. They had shot out one of the windows to open the door, to put people into there. So when the kids heard the gun shot, everybody started stampeding back towards us, so we had to calm them down and get them to start going north again.

We got them going north. Once they were evacuated, we went back to the pier and started putting people on private ferries. Ferries were coming in and in fact, there was a little shed there with one of the ferry people and we asked him to start calling whoever he could on the phone to get more ferries here. He said he has been trying to do that but no one is answering the phone up north. We said you have to do whatever you can. Get on the radio. We need more ferries.

Ferries started coming in. Again we started funneling people on to the ferries, telling them to go into Jersey City. We met a lot of resistance. A lot of people didn't want to leave Manhattan. That's like where are they going to take us. We were like, does it matter? You really need to get out of here right now.

Everyone left on ferries, then we finally started to hear radio communications again, because we

G. CACCIOLA

had no radio communications that whole time. We met up, while we were walking, we met up with Richie Zarrillo again, and he says they want everybody to go to the Chelsea Piers. So we started walking towards the Chelsea Piers and then we met up with Captain Stone and EMT Gregg Brady and I think at one point it was Commissioner Gribbon.

Q. Gribbon?

A. Commissioner Gribbon, yes. We started walking towards the Chelsea Piers. Captain Stone was complaining he had trouble breathing at this time and shoulder pain, so when we made it up to the pier we had asked that he be transported to the hospital, so they gave us a command car. We actually took him to the hospital, dropped him off at Bellevue and went back to the site.

When we went back to the site, we actually went back to Ground Zero. Chief McCracken was there and I saw Chief Peruggia and they were trying to formulate a plan for the on going events of that night into the following morning.

They had asked us -- now it was like maybe 5 p.m. at this point. 4 or 5 p.m. He had said he needed us to probably go home so this way we can be back by 4,

G. CACCIOLA

5 a.m. the following morning. We said okay. Now in order to walk back, we had to go around to -- what's that street in Battery Park City, the first street.

Q. South End?

A. South End, yes. We had to go around to South End Avenue. While we were walking, they were removing Chief Ganci's body. Lieutenant Scullion was there. And we stood with him as they were removing Chief Ganci's body. They had just put him on the bus and now they were going to go remove Commissioner Feehan's body. They wanted him on the same bus.

We walked with -- the bus drove around the corner and we followed the bus around the corner. When we got around the corner they said it was going to take a few minutes because he was still stuck in the hole. So they were trying to get him out. Father Delendic was there. Chief McFarland and I believe Captain Pineda.

So while we were standing there, one of the firefighters from SOC came over and I thought he had said he had a bag and he said [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

G. CACCIOLA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Then I think he sort of got a little upset by it and then John McFarland took it from him and then he placed it in the bus. It was going to be prolonged to get Commissioner Feehan out, so Chief Hirth said you know what, they told us to leave. Why don't we go back to the Battalion to make sure the rest of Manhattan is running and all the units are in place, because we have to come back early in the morning.

We came back here. Chief Hirth spoke to the units downstairs and spoke to the units at Bellevue. Made sure everybody was all right and accounted for at that point. Then we came back the following morning and were assigned to the ferry terminal.

Q. Okay. When you parked at the mouth of the Battery that was the Manhattan side?

A. The Manhattan side.

Q. How did you come up to the command post, do you remember? I know you said you walked, but do you remember what route you came?

A. We were on -- are you considering this north and south or vice versa?

Q. This is north.

G. CACCIOLA

A. East and west.

Q. South. West.

A. Okay. We were on the east side of West Street, where -- up until -- we were by -- we passed the torso. That was like 10 feet in front of us. Debris was still falling and actually debris was actually reaching that far down. That's when Chief Hirth said let's get away from that side of the street and we crossed over and then we were on West Street, on the west side the whole time up.

Q. Okay. Where was the command post?

A. The command post was set up in the driveway, again, I believe, of 2 World Financial Plaza. Wasn't it somewhere along here? I'm really bad with maps and directions. That's why they don't let me drive.

Q. Okay.

A. There was a little ramp and that's where they had set up, right in front.

Q. Then after the collapses you continued up?

A. We stopped here at the command post. We got where we needed to go. We cut through here so we wouldn't have to walk on West Street. That's why we walked from here. We were going to come right out here to go to Vesey Street. While we were in here is when

G. CACCIOLA

the first collapse occurred.

Q. Okay.

A. Then we cut out this way around the back.

Q. Around the back.

A. Then we went through the Winter Garden after it had collapsed, because we had to wait for all the glass to finish coming through. That was the only way out for us. We ended up outside on Vesey Street and West, but actually on Vesey.

Q. Here?

A. Right. Then we walked, I believe it had to be North End to Stuyvesant, because then we came up and around.

Q. Where were you when the second building came down?

A. When the second building came down we were, I believe on North and Vesey. Then we went back to -- that's when we walked to Stuyvesant. We were still funneling the people northbound, but we actually stopped them at Stuyvesant High School, then we went back into Battery Park by the piers.

Q. Any opinions or comments?

A. No. There was no way -- there is no way to ever critique or Monday morning quarterback what

G. CACCIOLA

happened. There is no way, I feel, I personally feel, any of us could have been prepared for what happened. All the training in the world. I mean we could be going to the academy every single day. Nothing could have prepared us for what happened.

Q. Right. Okay. I have two quick questions on names you gave. Richard Zarillo?

A. Yes.

Q. He is an EMT. Do you know where he is assigned?

A. Operations.

Q. Gregg Brady?

A. September 11 he was assigned to Division 1. He was a Chief's aide. Currently he is at Battalion 4.

Q. Okay.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Thanks again. Have a good day. The time is now 0744. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110155

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROBERT BROWNE

Interview Date: October 24, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick



MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 24, 2001. The time is 2140. I'm Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, title and assigned command area.

A. ROBERT BROWNE, deputy chief, Division 4.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force.

MR. ECCLESTON: Also present?

MR. KIMBALL: Robert Kimball, EMT, chief's aide, Fire Department.

Q. Chief Browne, were you working on the morning of September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was working that morning.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Could you please in your own words tell me about the events of the day?

A. I had logged on at eight o'clock in the

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morning, and I was enroute to the division office, and I got to approximately about 164th Street and the Grand Central Parkway when I heard the first radio reports there was possibly an incident going on at the World Trade Center.

I made a quick phone call to the Division 4 office and spoke to Sal Sangeniti and asked him what did it look like, you know, did he have anything more on it, and he said, "You better go. It sounds like it's a big one."

So I said all right, and I started heading into the job, and as I was -- naturally, as I was heading down the Grand Central Parkway, more and more information was coming in, and it sounded like it was very serious, and the reports from citywide radio were pretty chilling, and I knew that we would be going to work and having a busy day, so just trying to put my thoughts together, thinking back to '93 of what went on in '93 when I was there, and trying to get as much information as I could.

I actually put on 1010 WINS on the radio in the car, trying to get more information, because a lot of the information was being drowned out on citywide with all the numerous units coming up and stuff, and I

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guess I made it down onto the FDR. I went over the Triborough, down the FDR Drive. The FDR Drive in spots was partially closed by police officers, and I started to make some good time, and I guess as I got around down by the U.N., they were reporting over the radio that a second plane had hit the second tower.

Swung around west -- I swung around the battery, and I came up on West Street out of the tunnel from the east side, and there was an officer standing blocking my way, and he was -- he was trying to direct me over out of the way because there was bodies scattered along West Street all the way back as far as the tunnel at that location, and I was in amazement. I couldn't believe it.

I pulled up a little bit further onto -- by the Downtown Athletic Club on West Street there, and I pulled over, and I parked my car at that spot.

Q. Can you indicate on the map where you parked your vehicle?

A. Yeah. Probably -- let's see. Probably somewhere in this vicinity right here, down here.

Q. Do you know what vehicle number that was?

A. 792.

Q. 792?

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A. Yeah.

Q. Also chief, on that day, were you working with somebody?

A. No, I was by myself. As a matter of fact, it was my first official tour as a deputy chief with the department, and I did not have an aide at that time.

As I pulled up, I parked my car, grabbed my gear out of the car, and at that point, Chief Carasquillo and Sal Sangeniti had pulled up alongside of me with, I believe, Jason Katz, who was Billy Day's aide, and Billy was out, so I yelled over to Pete, would it be all right if I take Jason and keep Jason with me, and he said yeah, sure, no problem.

And I reported to the command post at that point.

Q. Where was the command post?

A. The command post was located on West Street, basically almost right in between Tower 1 and Tower 2 on the west side of the street over by the Winter Garden. That's where I -- when I got into the command post, Chief Gombo, and Chief Kowalczyk -- and Chief Kowalczyk appeared that he had just pulled up there himself, because he was just putting his coat.

I reported in and I asked them what they

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needed of me, what assignment they had for me, and they told me they wanted me to go to Liberty and West Street and run the operation at the corner of Liberty and West Street.

So with that I grabbed my aide, Jason, and we started heading back towards Liberty and West Street. We were walking back. We just left the command post. There was a lot of debris coming down off the building, and I turned around to Jason and I told Jason, "Make sure you have your chin strap on you your helmet. Don't just have it sitting on your head. Make sure you secure it to your head," and with, that a large piece of debris was coming down, sailing off the building. I remember looking up watching, because I was afraid that we were going to get hit with something, and it had to be almost the size of a Volkswagen car, a sheet of metal almost the size of a Volkswagen car, and it was -- it was burned. It was glowing red, and it just landed in the street in front of us, maybe 20 feet in front of us.

I turned around to Jason and I said, "Look, man, you got to be real careful. This is bad." I said, something -- you know, so he said, "All right," and we headed off to West Street down to West and

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Liberty. I got to the corner of West and Liberty, and on the east side -- on the east corner of West and Liberty, just underneath the foot bridge that crosses over, there were probably about three or four ambulances parked there, and all the personnel were out of their rigs with their equipment, but they were standing more towards the corner of -- they were more towards the Liberty Street side, just off of West, and they seemed to be like all in amazement. They were all standing there, staring up, looking at what was going on, and none of them had helmets on.

A couple of them were Metro Care units.

There was a voluntary unit there, one of our units, and we had units on the west side of Liberty, as well, standing there. Some of them had some gear on. Some of them had some helmets on, and I remember saying to Jason, "Jason, do me a favor. Let's take a piece of paper out, go over there, and identify who those people are. If they have helmets, make sure they get them on. If they don't have helmets, let me know." I said, "We need to get them out of here, you know, put them into an area that's back a way and little bit further."

Timewise, I'm not real good with the time frame, but I might have been there maybe ten minutes,

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and I don't know if I heard it over the radio, or if I heard it over somebody else's radio, or if somebody else just yelled, and they said, "Watch out! The building's coming down."

And with that, I can remember turning around, and I was standing right on the corner of West and Liberty, on the east corner of West and Liberty, and I can remember turning around and looking up at the building and seeing a very, very large section of the building just coming -- coming straight down at us with a sound like I have never heard before in my entire life, that it -- I had thought for a moment that another plane had come, that had hit the building. That's how loud the sound was.

I remember turning to everybody and looking and just telling them to run. I told them all just run, run, and that's pretty much what happened. I mean, I got -- it was basically a free-for-all, I think, at that point for everybody.

I ran, and I could feel the -- I could feel the air changing behind me, and I just said to myself that I was going to -- that I was going to run as far as I could until I felt something either hit me and knock me down or until -- until it knocked me down.

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I probably got about 20 feet or so, because I thought I was going to be able to get pretty far, but I only managed to get from the corner of West and Liberty to underneath the foot bridge, which was probably maybe only about 20 or 30 feet. I don't even know if it's that far, and I got hit in the back of the head with a small object, which startled me a little bit, and then I got struck across my back with a larger object, which knocked me to the ground, and at that point, I said, "Well, I guess I'm just going to stay right here," and I can remember grabbing my chin strap and holding onto my chin strap on my helmet, and just hoping that it didn't come off. I was afraid I was going to have a head trauma or something. I didn't want to wind up a vegetable after this thing, and I can remember praying, asking Him not to take me, and if He was going to take me, please make it fast.

At that point, it was like -- it got totally pitch black. I couldn't see anything. I couldn't breathe. There was a wave that was -- I don't know if you're a beach person, but if you're a beach person and you ever been in the ocean, and you have a large wave come over you, and you can just feel it keep coming and coming. It's like the debris just kept coming and



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piling up and piling up, and when it finally did stop, I wasn't sure if I was alive or if I was dead.

It was pitch black. I had something very heavy across my back. I had something across my legs, because I remember trying to move my legs, because I was stuck under whatever, this debris, and I wasn't able to move.

I can remember reaching for my radio and calling out a Mayday for the corner of Liberty and West, and nobody answered. There was no answer. It was just dead quiet, and I just assumed at that point that everybody was gone, and I wasn't -- I couldn't -- you know, I didn't call out any more.

Then as the thick black, black smoke and blackness around me started to clear a little bit, and it started to get a little bit grayer, kind of like got to a dark gray, and then it got like a lighter gray, I could hear -- as it started to get lighter, I could hear people from the distance yelling for help. I could hear people saying, "Help me, I'm over here," or "Help me, I'm over there," and I started doing the same thing.

I started calling out for help because I was unable to free myself from where I was, and I called

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out several times, and then finally I heard somebody answer, and they said, "Relax. We can see you. We're going to get you. Just take it easy. Just stay where you are."

And probably a couple of minutes later they got some of this debris off me, and they managed to get whatever it was that was on my back -- I believe it was a chunk of concrete or -- I don't know what exactly, a piece of metal. I'm not sure even sure exactly what it was that was on my back, and I had a large piece of metal across my legs. That's why I couldn't move my legs, but these two guys that got me out were like amazing. I couldn't believe it.

It was a guy from a react team and a Hatzolah paramedic, and when I got up from the pile, I guess I kind of just dusted myself off a little bit and tried to regain my composure, and I started looking for Jason, who had been with me, my aide, and I couldn't find him, and I assisted this paramedic from Hatzolah and the react guy in removing a couple of other people that were trapped in some debris out of that, and then all of a sudden Jason appeared, and he was hurt. His hand was hurt. He was a mess, and we sat him down.

I was trying to find Chief Wells. I had just

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prior to -- two minutes before the building going down, I had had a conversation with Chief Wells, and he had told me that he was going into the building with 18 Charlie, and he was much closer towards the tower than I was, and I was unable to find him.

Q. You need to take a break?

A. No, I'm all right.

Q. If you do, it's fine.

A. No, I'm okay.

So we tried to gather up as many people from that area as I possibly could, tried to put some sort of semblance of a team back together to see what we could do at that point, and I can remember Chief Wells coming up out of the middle of the pile over on -- over close towards the tower, and it was like I was just so relieved to see him at that point, you know, a special place in my heart. Charlie and I are good friends. It was devastating to think that he was gone at that point.

So we gathered up, started to take care of some of the people that were injured. We collected the people, and we kept them underneath that foot bridge there on the very west section by the World Financial Center there, and we bandaged up a few people, tried to

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get them together. There was no radio contact.

I didn't know where anybody else was, and then I don't know how much time actually transpired between the time that we took care of some of our members that were injured, and the next thing I know, the north tower collapsed, and again, that horrible sound, and we all just ran. We all ran again.

I didn't want to take my chance out on the street again that time. The financial center was there. A large window on the ground floor had been blown out from the first collapse. I was able to jump through that window with Jason and Chief Wells, and I didn't know if I should go completely through the building or if I should stay in there and whatever. Like I said, it was a coin toss.

I went in the building. I ran to the left as I entered the building. I found a bakery that was there. At that point, I lost Jason, because I think Jason went straight through. He ran straight through the building. I lost Chief Wells.

I ran into the bakery, and when I got into the bakery, there was a back room. I ran behind the counter and went to the back room, and there were two large freezers in there, and I went in there and I

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knelt -- I knelt in the corner facing the freezer as the debris was hitting the building, and the windows blew out in the place, and all that -- all over again. Relieved the whole thing over again, with all that black, thick, choking smoke, unable to see, the fear that -- whether or not that building was going to hold up, and, again, I don't know how long I was in there, but I was in there with -- there were three other gentlemen in the room with me when it started to clear. One guy was a photographer for the Daily News. The other guy was a transit worker or something, and I think the other guy was just a regular Joe, just a civilian who followed us, you know.

I hope he didn't follow me because I thought I knew where I was going, because he'd be shit out of luck if he did, but we all stayed in there.

I can remember it starting to clear a little bit once again, checked with them to make sure that -- checked with them to make sure that they were all all right, and I remember telling them, "Come on guys. We got to get out of here. I don't know if this building is going to hold up," because so much debris hit the building, I didn't know what kind of shape it was in, and I certainly didn't want to get caught in there,

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because nobody would have known we were ever in there. We could have been in there forever.

So we tried to make it out on the -- tried to exit out of the West side of the building to South End Avenue, and there was a whole bunch of debris blocking the doorway for our exit out, so the four of us stood there and grappled through the debris enough so we could climb up over some of the stuff and exit out onto the avenue.

When I got out onto south end avenue, there was an ambulance sitting right there, perfect shape, no problem. It was running. I said, oh, troops. Somebody else is here. That's so good, and I went running up to the truck, and naturally it was locked, just running, sitting there, but I was -- I was pretty stunned at that point, and I think that's the first time when I heard what appeared to be or what I thought in my mind was that we were going to be bombed, because I heard a fighter jet overhead, and when I heard the fighter jet overhead, Jason had come out of a store across the street on South End Avenue, and we looked at each other, and I said, "You all right?" He said, "Yeah, I'm okay. I can keep going."

I said, "Okay, good. Come on, we got to get

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away from here." I said, "I don't know what's going on yet." I said, "We got to get away from here. I have no communication with anybody." I said, "Let's just move away from here."

So I gathered anybody that was on the street there at that point, because people were starting to straggle out of the stores and stuff, and I told them, "Come on. You got to keep moving, keep moving." And I made it to the -- again, I heard that jet and I thought we were going to be bombed, and I started to run, and there was a cop that appeared on the corner, and he says, "Don't run. It's one every ours." He says, "It's one of ours. Don't worry."

And that was quite a -- quite a moment of relief, knowing that it wasn't, you know, whoever had done this horrible thing to us, that they weren't now going to just be bombing us.

I got to the corner of Albany and South End, and I encountered four firefighters carrying a firefighter with Commissioner Gregory and Dr. Kelly, and they needed an ambulance, and I looked down -- I looked down the block at the river promenade that runs along the Hudson River on Albany Street, and there were four ambulances down there, so Jason ran down there,

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got one of the ambulances, brought it back up.

We loaded the firefighter in the ambulance, and they took him off to the hospital. So with those three ambulances that were down there, I said, "Come on, let's go down to the water." And Commissioner Gregory had mentioned that the fire boat was going to be coming up to that location, so I went down there, and there were probably five or six, seven EMS personnel. I couldn't tell you who they are, what the names were, who they worked for, but they were there, and I think one crew was from Flushing Hospital, and there were hundreds and hundreds of people just running down that promenade.

All kinds of boats were pulling up. The fire boat had pulled up and docked. Several other boats -- a police boat. There was a tug boat there. There were civilian boats pulling up, willing just to take people, hand them off over onto the boat, and they were going to take them off on over to Jersey for us.

I got together the crews there, and we kind of put a little makeshift triage area together, and we would evaluate people before we put them on the boat to see which ones -- because we wanted to put all the noninjured people on one boat, and we wanted to put the



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injured people on another boat, and, again, I can't tell you how long I operated at that location. It must have been an hour and a half, maybe two hours. I'm not even sure. But we loaded hundreds and hundreds of people onto those boats that were there.

At one point Charlie Wells just appeared again out of the blue, and it was a great moment. I was so happy to see him, because I had lost him in the second collapse again. I remember we hugged each other, and we said, you know, to each other, "You all right? You all right?" And he said "Yeah," and he says, "I'm going back. I'm going to do some stuff. You stay here, do what you got to do," and he took off.

Probably about 15 or 20 minutes later, Chief Villani walked up the promenade and told me that they were setting up a major area down at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, and that I should make my way down there with whatever resources that I had, so that's what we did.

We gathered up the people that I could gather. We confiscated one of these little golf carts that somebody was using up and down the promenade. We took that from them, and I loaded all these people on that, and we started heading down towards the Staten

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Island Ferry Terminal.

I got probably about two blocks away, and I encountered a paramedic from Battalion 57 -- I don't know the kid's name -- running in the opposite direction that we were going, towards us, and he was screaming at the top of his lungs. He was in a panic, and he was yelling, "There's a gas leak! There's a gas leak! There's going to be an explosion. You have to get out of here. You have to get out of here."

And he was really -- he was wild. He was real wild, and I jumped off the cart, because he ran right by me, and I jumped off the cart, and I chased him down, and I grabbed him, and I put him against the wall, and I kind of shook him, and I told him, "Look, relax. You're going to be okay. Everything is fine."

I told him who I was. I said, "Come on, you're coming with me," and he was like in this panic, and I told him again, "You're going to be fine. You're coming with us. You're going to be okay," and I convinced him. He calmed down a little bit. He was shaken. He started crying.

I put him on the cart, and we headed down. We got around the vicinity of the North Cove Marina, and they were doing major evacuations into Jersey out

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of the North Cove Marina, and there was a police lieutenant and a police sergeant standing in the middle of the roadway, not allowing anybody to proceed past there, because he said there is a gas leak or there is a report of a gas leak. He says everybody has to evacuate lower Manhattan.

So at that point, we got on a police launch and went to Jersey. As I hopped on the police launch, this buddy of mine that I fish with all the time, who works for harbor, he said, "Are you all right? Is Chief McCracken okay? You know, what's the deal? Did everybody make it from Rockaway?" I said, "Look, I don't know." I said, "I couldn't tell you anything," and we made it over to the dock in Jersey in a matter of minutes, maybe five minutes or so. Scooted us right over there.

I got off the launch. One of the EMTs that was rushing with us from Flushing Hospital, she started having like an asthma attack or something. She was having some sort of reaction. I don't know what it was, and I made sure that all of them stayed there and went up to the medical treatment area up there to get seen.

At that point, I turned around with Jason. I

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said, "Jason, I got to go back. I can't stay here." I said, "I can't stay here and just receive victims here." I said "I need to go back."

Jason said, "Okay, I'm going with you." He says, "I'm still all right," and I yelled to my buddy, and he told me -- he says, "I'll be back in five minutes." He said, "I'll take you back with me next trip."

And in the interim, another police boat pulled in, and when the police boat was getting ready to pull out, I just hopped on that boat and got back, and I made it down to -- I got back into the North Cove Marina, and I made it down into the spot in Battery Park where the Indian Museum is. It's right by the launch for the Liberty Island thing, and there was probably maybe five or six ambulances parked there, and Chief Mark Stefans was there in charge of that operation. He was told to go there, and that's where he was, and he had several EMTs there.

They weren't seeing any patients. It was that same frustration that I think that everybody felt that whole time after the first initial patients prior to the building going down. Everybody was just kind of just standing around in wonderment, wondering where are

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all the victims, and he was there, and they took care of me there.

I was having a lot of trouble with my eyes. I couldn't see really well. I could hardly open my eyes at that point from all the stuff that was in my eyes, and I don't really think that I was feeling anything yet as far as injuries or anything like that, because I was kind of just running on adrenaline, and all I could remember was that I wanted to call home to let them know I was alive. I was unable to get out. I couldn't reach anybody.

I probably stayed there with Mark Stefans probably about 25 or 30 minutes. Again, I don't know. It could have been an hour and a half, it could have been two hours. My time line is horrible. I'm sorry, but we were there for awhile, and I turned around to Mark and I said, "Mark, we're not doing anything here." I said, "Everybody is just, you know, maybe a half a mile away at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Maybe that is where we should take all these resources. Let's pack them up. Let's go down there, and we'll shut this thing down and go down here. We are not seeing anybody here."

So that was what we did. We talked about it

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and he decided yeah, okay, we'll do that, and we got everybody together, packed up all our stuff, got the ambulances and all, and sent them down there, and Chief Stefans and I walked from that location down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, and as I walked into the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, I guess I had reached my point where I could probably no longer function, and I walked in, and I can remember seeing Dr. Richman's face, and Dr. Richman took one look at me, and he says, "Bobby," he says, "You got to lie down." So I said, "I'm all right. I'm all right."

He says, "No, you're done. You are not working any more." He said, "Lie down. Let us take care of your eyes." He says -- you know, and that's when I tried to lay down, I couldn't lay down. I realized that my back was injured, that I had something wrong with my back, and I couldn't lay down at that point, and they flushed my eyes. They took some vital signs, and the next thing I know, I was getting in the back of an ambulance and going off to the hospital, and I believe I went to the hospital sometime in the vicinity around three o'clock or 3:30 in the afternoon, so, again, my time -- what areas where I thought I was only for like 15, 20 minutes, it could have been a lot

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longer, and so somewhere along there all that time transpired, but that's pretty much my story of that day.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview? Anything at all?

A. No.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is concluded at 2212 hours.

File No. 9110156

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DAVID TIMOTHY

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 25th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0648 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT TIMOTHY: EMT David Timothy.

MR. RADENBERG: Of EMS Battalion 4. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. David?

A. Well, I guess at approximately 8:48 when everything started my partner and I were sitting on I believe that was Madison and Henry Street, if I'm not mistaken. No, Catherine and Henry, which is about a block away from our 89, our unit's 04 Boy.

What happened was a civilian had approached -- in fact, let me just start that over. A transmission came over the air about something hitting or some sort of explosion in the World Trade Center. Secondly, a civilian walked up to our ambulance and said, "I don't know if you guys heard about I, but they're

bombing the World Trade Center."

Okay. We decided, all right, let's just take a slow ride over there and see what's going on. As soon as we started moving off and we had the Trade Center in view, my partner of course made some expletives and he got on the air and said he saw what happened right now, put us on the assignment.

I guess after that it probably took us a few minutes to get over there from our location. Basically it's quick to get around Manhattan from where we were.

We got there and we were -- we took a route down Fulton Street and ended up behind at one point 01 Charlie, directly behind them. Not to block the street because there were other engine companies coming in, we pulled up in front of them. I would say we were between Fulton and Dey on Church.

Of course at this time the south tower was engulfed in flames. There was debris everywhere. People were running out of the buildings. I guess people started coming towards us asking for help. A lot of people were

directing them to just get away from the buildings if they can.

There was one individual, he had glass all over him. He said he just got thrown through some glass. We put him on our ambulance, and we continued to try to get like a few people as well in the ambulance.

The next thing I heard was a loud like an engine roar. I looked up, and the next thing I knew I just saw -- I don't know if it was the tail end of the plane or what, but I saw something. When I looked up, I heard "boom." I'm sorry, the north tower was the first one. The south tower then got hit when we were right there.

My partner was actually trying to put someone in the ambulance at the time. I grabbed him and kind of like pushed him in and closed the doors, and I like ran back up Fulton into a little bit of like I guess a cul-de-sac. It was a big garage door. There was a bunch of people in there. I ran back towards the ambulance, and I moved the ambulance around to Fulton and Broadway.

My partner instructed me, he said, "Listen, let's just get these people to the hospital, you know, Beekman." We went to Beekman Hospital. Actually we went up to Dey and back onto Fulton and Broadway and went to Beekman Hospital.

There was probably about five or six people. We dropped them off. There was one guy with a broken ankle. This one guy was having an asthma attack right then and there. The guy -- we actually long-boarded him. There were like two other civilians. Really I can't remember what was the extent of the injuries. So we took them to the hospital. We left.

Now, when the explosion hit I don't know if -- it actually took me off my feet, because I fell. I actually got cuts and stuff like that all over my hands and whatnot. My partner, he wanted to take me off service. I was like, "No, no, no, I've got to help someone. Let's just do what we've got to do and get back and try to give them some assistance."

We took him back and for some reason I kept hearing on the radio something about a

staging area at Vesey and West. It was so blocked up, you couldn't really travel around it. So we ended being back at the same location that we were before, which was Fulton and Church, of course once again still parked in front of 01 Charlie's unit.

Lieutenant Melarango, he came up to me and he basically said don't move the bus. Leave the bus where it is. Just before that actually Lieutenant Medjuck had instructed the same thing. He said don't move the bus whatever.

The next instructions from him were whatever you do don't leave. What we're going to do is give you -- I can't remember if he said six or eight, whatever, like six patients. The next instructions were to take these people to Brooklyn, take them as far into Brooklyn as you can, go as far as into Kings County. I said, "All right. Not a problem."

So more or less now it was more like a stand and really wait kind of a show. At this time both towers of course are engulfed in flames. This is when to me the worst of it really started beginning. Now you see the people

jumping out of the buildings. There are body parts everywhere. It just was a mess.

So my partner and I were just waiting there. I think we just started to get the first of the few people, and now I'm like wondering, all right, what am I supposed to do? I'm driving, so I guess I'm going to have to wait.

So my partner now -- I think he's just getting one person on board and just started hearing I guess like -- to me it sounded like the 8:45 from Jamaica station going to Atlantic -- to Flatbush Avenue, the Long Island Railroad, just some big train just right over your head, like a whole bunch of locomotives just running right over your head.

I looked up, and the building just tilted and started coming down. All I could say was run. That's the only thing I could remember from them is just saying run. I could have sworn my partner was behind me, and I'm running.

I'm running actually down north on Church and made like a quick right on Vesey where the Stage Deli is I guess right here. To me it looked like it was open. I ran straight to it,

and it was locked.

At this time it just got totally black. All I could do is think of right then and there was just to crouch and just try to get shelter, because things are hitting me. Something started hitting me in my back.

There was a whole bunch of people in front of me, and everybody's like -- I don't know. I guess the last person they saw was me, and people are like, "What are we going to do? What are we going to do?"

Out of nowhere this person grabs my shoulder and happened to be a cop. I said, "Have you got anything heavy on you like your night stick or something?" I grabbed him and threw him right in front of me. I said, "There is glass right in front of you. Start breaking it, because that's the only way we can get shelter."

So he started breaking the glass, and we went in. I instructed everybody to get in there. People were coughing, respiratory problems, whatever the case may be. I started telling everybody, "Listen, there's water. I'm sorry, but just start cleaning your face off,

wash your mouth off." Guys were coming in with irritated eyes. I said, "Wash your eyes out." It's a deli, so there are sinks and everything. I said, "Wash your face off, whatever."

The cop was like, "Where do we go from here?" I said, "If anybody comes in here that can walk, let them get as far away as possible." It was so weird.

A woman actually came up to me and asked me how to get uptown. I mean, basically she wanted to know if that train station, the A train, which was I guess Fulton Street train station, if she should take it to go uptown. I didn't even know -- I said, "Ma'am, I don't even know what to tell you, to be honest with you. I don't know what to tell you." I said, "I don't even know if they're running."

After that we probably stayed -- time, don't even ask me time. I don't even know what time it is by this time. If I had to make an estimate, we probably stayed there probably a half hour, if that much, after the first building collapsed.

Let's see, the first building



collapsed -- the first one collapsed, oh, 9:55? Wow. We probably stayed there like not even a half hour, probably like 15, 20 minutes, until all the smoke cleared a little bit.

Then I walked back outside and I started looking for my partner. At this time the deli is cleared out. I started looking for my partner and couldn't find him. The first person I bumped into was Alex Lousky. I always remember that. He said he couldn't even find his partner. I told him I saw James right behind me. I said, "Have you seen him?" He's like, "No." All right.

Now, the thing was I didn't even know where my ambulance was at this point. Even though they said it was still there, I didn't even think about checking.

Now, at this time I started walking back on Church going south, and I got back to Fulton Street. There was a bunch of rubble and stuff right around here. This building was -- I don't even want to talk about that building. You couldn't really see much down this way anyway. But I walked here and I walked back up Fulton

Street. This is where I saw Alex, right around in the middle of Fulton.

Q. Okay, between Church and Broadway.

A. Right.

I walked back up Fulton Street, and I saw Jay right in front of -- I guess this is The Chase Manhattan Bank right here on the corner. Of course I gave him the biggest hug I could ever think of. I just asked him, "Are you okay?" He said, "Yeah, I'm --" He asked me the same thing.

He said, "Listen, the bank told us we could come inside and we could start bringing people in. We were in there, and of course everybody else was like just in a daze. There were people in the bank, there were people crying. The one thing that was kind of great is that people actually had access to phones.

I think what happened is at this time I lost -- I couldn't even find my radio. Jay had his. So I got on the radio and said, "04 Boy, all present and accounted for. Where is staging?" He gave us two locations. The one that was closest was the South Ferry.

Jay said, "Look, let's just stick

around here for a while, see what we can do. Let's just not leave just yet. Probably more people can come in." At this time I think I walked back out. If I'm not mistaken, I walked back out of the bank and I saw one or two lieutenants and one other guy. I think they were walking in the direction of Fulton Street.

The next thing I knew, I'm standing outside and this woman asked me, "Where do I go? Where do I go?" I said, "Usually you get as far away as possible from here or you go inside the bank and just try to compose yourself, because I don't know what to tell you right about now. It's not like -- I'm not saying I don't want to tell you something. It's like if I tell you go north and something happens up north, I don't want to tell you --"

Q. Right.

A. So I just told her, "Listen, get as far away from the area right now." The next thing I knew, you started hearing more explosions. I guess this is when the second tower started coming down.

This time I was like, you know what,

what else? What else? I almost thought I had died the first time. I thought, what else is there? I walked back in the building and said, "Jay, the second tower is coming down." He said, "What?" He said, "Everybody just get down on the floor and just get behind something."

The same thing happened to the second tower. I'm looking from the window, just coming down. It was like, well, oh, well. I'm like, why am I standing in front of this glass, because there's glass right in front of me. I'm like, am I nuts? So I just walked away I crouched down behind a desk.

The one thing I did is a looked behind me, and the revolving door was spinning. From the force of the wind it just started turning. Of course it just got pitch-black again. What can you do? You sit there and wait it out.

It says here I guess the north tower collapsed at 10:29. So we started off -- we had an elderly Jewish man. From the time he got there, he was on a stair chair. We had water and stuff like that, so we were giving him water to drink and telling him to try to relax. People

were calling loved ones.

We got an ambulance, and we took the old man to the ambulance. We asked if anyone else wanted to go to the hospital. We told them, "Listen, if you're not going to the hospital, you can't stay in the bank. Get as far away from here as possible. Start heading towards the bridge. Do whatever you've got to do just to get away from the area."

All right. So I said, "Jay, listen, of course the other location is up by Chelsea Piers. We can't go up there." We're on foot. For some reason I think one of the guys had found a ESU tech bag, a really big one, and they brought that in. We started trying to see the inventory to see what we had. Let's just grab it and let's just start heading out to the South Ferry.

We grabbed the stuff. I took the bag on my back, started heading down Broadway, and walked to the South Ferry. And that was it, at least for us.

Q. What's your partner's last name?

A. Zion.

Q. Zion?

A. Yeah. He actually quit.

Q. Yeah, I heard that.

The ambulance that took the man from the bank, was that a fire ambulance? Do you know who it was?

A. No. I have a feeling it was a Brooklyn ambulance, because the unit that drove it, I don't know if they're from Manhattan it could have been Brooklyn or whatever else. I don't know. Then again, it could be all the way uptown. I don't know. I only know the guys from Queens and this Battalion, 4.

Q. After you lost your partner with the first collapse, were you with any other ambulance people?

A. Yeah. I was standing with one of the lieutenants, I think it was Medjuck, at one point. You know what, I really can't truly remember, but I knew I saw someone with a blue shirt, a light blue shirt, that is.

We didn't really lose each other because, you know what, because I knew exactly where he was when the first tower collapsed. Oh, I'm sorry, no. I'm thinking about the first

plane crash -- or the second plane crash.

When the first building collapsed, no, I wasn't with any lieutenants at all. I didn't see any lieutenants. I only saw lieutenants after I found him.

Q. After you found Jay?

A. Yeah.

Q. At the bank?

A. Yeah. I think there was Melarango and someone else. I knew it was one and one. Then one EMT was with him. It was a group of people, and they were heading down Fulton Street, if I'm not mistaken, back towards the Battery.

That's all I can remember. A lot of that day is just like a big blur, believe it or not. I mean, I did what I had to do. I tried to keep that much composure. But when you try to formulate a time line, the only thing you can remember is like the events. You don't remember like at 9:56 --

Q. Right, yeah.

A. As far as I'm concerned, time just stood still for a long while. It was interesting.

Q. Any thoughts or comments on the day?

A. Let's just hope it doesn't happen  
again.

Q. I agree with you on that one.

A. I can't think of anything else.

5:25, I didn't know that was the time  
it fell, Seven World Trade.

Q. Yeah, it was later in the afternoon.

A. Like I said, that's as much as I  
remember. It was bad.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now  
0708 hours, and the interview is concluded



File No. 9110157

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RICHARD BRODERICK

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 25th. The time is 6:52 a.m. my name is Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're conducting an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center. Our interview today is with --

EMT BRODERICK: Richard Broderick, emergency medical technician, Battalion 10, Manhattan.

A. I responded to the World Trade Center. We were at St. Luke's Hospital when we heard it go down. The police officers were with us. We heard it go over their radio as a level 3, which I didn't understand what a level 3 was, but they said that it was a plane into the towers but they didn't know what type of plane.

So we took our patient to St. Luke's Hospital, and my partner came out and said we were going to the World Trade. I said, okay, fine. So we started to head down the West Side Highway, and the more we approached the scene, the scenario, we saw the towers and we saw the smoke bellowing out of the first tower. It was

pretty scary.

When we pulled in, we pulled in to West Street and Vesey, which is supposedly the staging area for EMS units and other emergency vehicles. I saw Mayor Giuliani walk in front of us, and I assumed that was before he got trapped in the Trade Center himself in the bunker.

So they told us to go up the street, which I think is Vesey. I pulled into the spot, and the next thing I know, there was a third emergency medical technician who came running over to us and said he was from Queens General. He took the train up. He said he worked -- his name was Santiago. I don't know his first name. Spanish kid, young kid, very nice kid.

The next thing you know, they were handing us five burn victims. I don't know what they looked like because I was still in the driver's seat. I didn't even put the thing in park. My partner said, "We've got five burn victims. We're going to Bellevue Hospital." I said, "Okay, fine."

We pulled out, and I swung around -- I don't know the street, but I swung around the

block. The next thing, I was back on West Street. When I was coming my partner yelled -- can I curse?

Q. Do whatever you want.

A. He said, "Oh, shit." I said, "What's the matter?" I looked in the mirror and all I saw was clouds, dust. I put my foot down on the pedal. When you're driving, you're like with your foot all the way down and you're still trying to push the vehicle to get it going because you think you're not moving.

I just took off. I flew up West Street all the way up to 34th. From then on -- we got to Bellevue, and we disembarked the patients. I didn't even get out of the vehicle again either. The doctors and the nurses were all there.

Q. They were grabbing them out of the bus?

A. They were just grabbing them out of the vehicle with my partner and the young guy that was with us. They told me to get out of the emergency room bay. As I swung out of the bay, the next thing I know my partner is coming running back with a stretcher and everything and he's telling me, "We're going back down. We're

going back down."

We flew down to the FDR Drive, and I got off at Pearl Street. We came up the ramp right by One Police Plaza. I couldn't believe the scenery. It was like -- I don't know how to explain it. People were just full of dust. It was like snow. It was all over the place.

People were in a daze. They were just -- they looked like zombies. The word was zombies. They were walking. They were confused. I had to go really slow through the streets or I would hit them. You couldn't see anything anyway it was so full of dust.

We wound up going down -- I don't know what the streets were, to be honest with you. I remember passing the Federal Reserve Bank.

Q. Maiden Lane is the Federal Reserve.

A. Because I happened to see the marshals and everybody out with the shot guns and machine guns. I noticed the area right away. The next thing, we saw an ambulance flying. So my partner said, "Follow them." It was a private ambulance. It wasn't an EMS unit. It looked like a New York Hospital unit. I said, okay.

So we started following them. I don't know what the street was, but we got to Greenwich. He made the left and was moving to the devastation. My partner is saying, "Follow him. Follow him." I said, "I'm not following him. I'm going to go away from the scene."

So I made a right onto Greenwich. Don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking my partner. He wanted to help. I understand that. You know what it is? I've been a lieutenant. I've been through the staging courses that they give you and the management courses. So in my head I'm clicking as a lieutenant actually or whatever that you get a safe area, because your no good to nobody unless you're safe.

I pulled in. We found a spot on Harrison and Greenwich, clear as a bell. Nothing was going on. I said, "We're stopping here." So we parked the vehicle, put it on an angle. The next thing you know, an elderly woman came up to me and said she was having chest pain. So my partner and the young guy, Santiago, took her in the ambulance.

Meanwhile I'm trying to notify the

dispatcher exactly where we were, in case something did happen they would know where we were. Next thing you know, here comes another lady walking up saying she's having an asthma attack.

Meanwhile a paramedic unit pulls in, an EMS paramedic unit. One guy I know -- I don't know his last name. His name is Joe. But I know he's out of Bellevue. And Eddie was his partner, a bald-headed gentleman. They took care of the asthma patient.

Meanwhile I had -- no exaggeration, I had 25 people come up to me and volunteer. I didn't know what to do with them. I gave them all little stupid things to do just to keep them occupied. I'd say, all right, take this gentleman's name, take this gentleman's name, take this one's name, you know, just to keep them -- you can feel they wanted to do something, and there wasn't much they could do.

Next thing you know, I see a man walking up the street, dragging up the street. So I run down to him. I grabbed him, and I look at his collar, his suit, and it was a WTC

employee, World Trade Center. I don't know if he was a security person or -- I remember his face, I just don't remember -- I remember looking at his ID. I remember his face, but I don't remember his name. This guy looked like a tiger got at him. His shirt was all ripped up, pale, sweaty. I sat him down.

Meanwhile at this time St. Vincent's medics pull in. The medic from St. Vincent used to be my partner, Phil. So Phil comes running over. I said, "Phil, I've got a World Trade Center guy here." Okay. He starts listening to his signs, started giving him oxygen, put him in the truck, put him in St. Vinnie's truck.

The next thing you know, the police are running up the street. It wasn't 10, 15 minutes; we were there for a good hour. You figure by the time we dropped the patients off at Bellevue and went back to the scene, when I got to Pearl Street it had to be around 11 a.m., quarter to 11, 11 a.m.

So the next thing you know, cops were coming up and we were giving them respirator masks. Then they gave us things because we



didn't have things. We were treating the patients. The next thing you know, the police officers started running up the street and they said, "We've got to get out of here. We've got to get out of here. It's going to blow." There was supposed to be a gas leak.

We just threw everybody in the ambulance, just threw everybody in the bus. The volunteers, the people that were so willing -- I had a gentleman come up to me and say, "I have a gentleman stuck in the elevator on the fifth floor right across the street." I said, "Sir, I can't do anything. I'm busy. Tell a police officer."

Q. Right.

A. I'm really busy. I can't do it. He said, "Okay, no problem." I don't know where he went. We just threw everybody in the ambulance and just raced up about three blocks. There was a staging area there. I don't know whether it was -- again, everything was going so fast, I don't remember the streets.

Lieutenant Remz was there, Lieutenant Maria Santaromita. I know these people from

working at Woodhall Hospital many years ago. They are lieutenants now. I told them what we had, and they said no problem. Then I said we had numerous back boards because we found a vehicle unmanned, so we took their equipment so we could be prepared. We didn't know what else was going to happen.

I think what happened was when we left West Street and Vesey, I assume that is when the second plane hit the tower. I was told that later on, the second plane hit the tower, and I saw it on TV for the people with cameras.

From there on, then we went to Chelsea Pier and we sat there for two hours. I was getting bored. I'm here to do what I'm supposed to do. I don't want to get hurt, but I'm here to help.

Then from there we left and we wound up at North Moore and Greenwich, where we assisted Lieutenant Dave --

Q. Restuccio?

A. Restuccio? My partner Mike was his assistant getting the paperwork. Again, what we're taught in EMS is when you're the driver of

the vehicle you're to maintain your vehicle so no one will steal it. So I stayed with my vehicle.

When we were there, some kids -- we didn't know they were kids at the time -- started throwing something from the roof of the building off of -- and it was hitting the ground hard. Everybody started running, started panicking. The police went running in with their guns out. The next thing you know, they had tons -- I'm exaggerating, but we had like a dozen cops in riot gear standing in front of us.

Then a gentleman was trying to get by with a bike, and the police officer started getting -- you could tell he was there. He had dust all over him. He was drained. The guy was pushing. The cop was getting annoyed.

Anyway, from there on we just sat at North Moore and Greenwich. I saw building seven go down. I saw it actually go down. It was a couple blocks away from us. From there on we just sat there till -- I just sat there until 10:30 at night and didn't do anything. I just watched everybody else going into what they call ground zero now. I was like, what are we doing

here? I want to go. I want to get in there. I want to at least help, do something. That's what I'm trained for.

From there on, again, from 2:00 in the afternoon to 10:30 at night, we just sat at North Moore and Greenwich. Of course at 1:00 in the afternoon I finally got a chance to phone my folks to let them know I was fine. Of course my house phone was busy.

I called my father at work, who is now a security officer in the Marriott on 48th and Lexington, so he was very happy to hear my voice. He said, "I figured you'd be there." I said, "I just want to let you know I'm alive. I'm okay." I said it was really bad. It was the worst I've seen, and I've seen a lot in 22 years, going on 22 years. This is the worst of my career that I've ever seen. It blew me away.

I only went down there twice. I went down there the day it happened, and just about two weeks ago I was down at ground zero. We did family escorts. So I had to go back. There really was nothing I could do after that. The next day all I did was come to the station and

clean the vehicles to get them all ready that were down there.

So again, we got assigned to go down there. I was saying I don't want to go down there no more. It took me two weeks just to get over what I saw the first day. So all right. We go to ground zero. No problem. We go to staging. They told us we're going to be going on the boat. I said, "Oh, great. I'm a real boat lover." I am.

They were very nice. I couldn't believe the politeness. They were so nice, the state troopers there, which was scary when they're wearing their dark sunglasses.

Okay. We did our first family escort on the boat, which wasn't too bad. That was my first time down since that day, and I could not believe the devastation that I saw, the hole.

So we did one trip. One woman got nervous. She was crying, a British woman. A family member, I think her husband was in there, so I escorted her and another gentleman. We took her back to the boat and stayed with her, with the police officers guarding us like we were the

president of the United States. Really, unbelievable.

The guy, the correction officer, he was excellent. He helped us out great with taking our equipment and putting it on the car for us, following us wherever we went. He said, "We are here for you." I said, "Great. Thank you."

Second trip, no problem. People were upset as usual but very nice. They were thanking us.

The third trip, we went to ground zero. My partner says to me, "Look, I see a picture of a paramedic on her blouse." I said, "Let me go look." I'm curious. I go look. When somebody says something to you at the same time the name, I said Carlos. She said at the same time, it was his mother. She said, "You know Carlos?" I said, "Carlos, I used to work with him in Woodhull."

It was funny, I ran into him August 5th. I know the date well because I ran my sister into the emergency room for emergency surgery, and he knew my sister. They were talking. Actually the last time I saw Carlos was

August 5th.

Anyway, I met his wife, very nice girl. I heard the story that he went there to get her out and she was out already and there was no way they could reach each other. It blew me away. It blew me away again. I was dealing with it, but when it comes close to home, like everybody else that's involved in the situation.

I stayed with them. I stayed with them through the whole tour. I even told the lieutenant, the police officer that was involved with the job of escorting the families, I said I'm staying with them. She said no problem. I stayed with her crying on me. That's what blew me away, I think. The only thing I kept thinking of is that could have been me that day, and I was hoping that somebody would be doing that for my mother.

Then when we were up on the podium,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Then they started showing pictures two minutes before he was missing. It just blew me away. It tore me apart, it really did. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We escorted them back to the boat. We even escorted them back to the staging area. The police officer that was involved with the family escort thing said they couldn't believe how great we were.

So we got back to the station, and I heard the phone ring and Lieutenant Giblin was on the phone and he said, "They're standing in front of us." I said, "Oh, what do we do now?" I thought we were in trouble. He said, "No, that was the Mayor's office called OEM, OEM called EMS, and they want you guys back tomorrow because they said you did an excellent job." I said, "Well, I'm not going back. I can't."

It blew me away. As a matter of fact, I didn't come to work the next day. I took the day off. No, I did come to work, I'm sorry. I worked with somebody else. I couldn't take it. It just blew me -- I'm strong, but it caught home.

That's about it. I don't know what else to tell you. Again, it was the worst thing



I ever seen in my whole career.

Q. And hopefully ever will.

A. Again, I've seen people decapitated.

I've seen people dragged by tractor-trailers, and it never bothered me. Now I guess maybe because I'm getting older or it's just that I've seen so much that it's enough.

But I still love my job. I still like taking care of people; I really do. I love taking care of the elderly. I go the nine yards. I don't care how long I'm on the scene, I go nine yards. That's the way I am.

I don't know what else to tell you. That's about it, Mike. I don't know what else to really -- unless you have questions.

Q. No, nothing else. It's just anything else you might want to say; if not, Rich --

A. I just feel real bad about the people that died. It's sad. It's unfortunate. I really think that's what caused the firemen and cops -- did I tell you I knew eight people. I knew four emergency service cops, three firemen, and that's really about it, the only seven people I knew.

The emergency service cops were from here, Truck 2. Truck 2 in Manhattan, ESU 2, I knew the three guys very well, because my friend is an ESU sergeant, which thank God he was on vacation at his new home in New Winstler. I know him; he would have been in. It took him two and a half hours.

When I saw him three weeks -- I just saw him last week for the first time, and we're like buddy-buddy. He said, "Rich, I was worried about you. I thought you were there." I said, "I was." I said, "You know what? I'm glad you weren't there." It was like, I know him.

But anyway, the officers that died, I knew them. I knew them. Pappageorge, I knew him from here. I didn't know him that well, but I knew him from here. I didn't know he was a firefighter. I didn't know he graduated and went to firefighter.

Who else? Oh, a buddy of mine, my other friend, his brother's missing. I just ran into him last Saturday and he gave me a big hug and he said he was going to get in touch with me for the memorial service. I knew his brother

Carl. He was a firefighter. He's been missing.  
He just got married seven months ago.

So all these poor people that died.  
It's just sad. I was hoping somebody would talk  
to me about this, because it really has been  
eating me up. I'm pretty strong, but this has  
hit me hard.

Q. This is something that nobody's ever  
seen before. That's what it is.

A. I'm glad they're doing what they're  
doing right now. I hate to say it like that, but  
I'm glad they're doing what they're doing. We  
have to, because we're going to live in terror  
for the rest of our lives.

I feel like I'm a prisoner now. Not  
too much, but just being stopped just to look at  
my ID to see if I'm getting on the bridge all  
right and letting the taxicabs get on for  
nothing. That's wrong. But that's how I feel.

That's really all I have to say, Mike.  
I don't know what else to tell you, again, unless  
you have something else to ask me.

Q. That's about it, Rich.

A. I can't think of anything. All I can

remember -- I met some nice people out of it from the volunteers that were helping. They were very nice. I couldn't believe the people that wanted to help. They were unbelievable. Actually 25 people came up -- I didn't know what to do with them. I was lost. I'm trying to say, okay, you do this, you do that.

One was a volunteer fireman. "I'm a volunteer fireman." "Take care of that World Trade Center guy." That was before the St. Vinnie medic came, like two minutes before they pulled in. I said, "Take care." I'm running around doing this, doing this, helping the cops, giving them masks.

I mean, it's part of our job. I understand that. I felt good that I did something. I felt bad that I couldn't do more. I sat at that staging area all night. I really got bored. I was getting tired just standing there. I really wish I could have done more, but I did what I had to do and I feel good about it. Unfortunately it happened when it did.

That's about it.

Q. All right, Rich. I thank you so much

for your interview and your feelings.

A. I hope it works out.

MR. TAMBASCO: This interview will  
conclude at 712 hours.

File No. 9110158

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JONATHAN MORITZ

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. MORITZ

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 25th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0715 hours. I am conducting an interview with...

EMT MORTIZ: Jonathan Moritz, M-o-r-i-t-z, EMT, Battalion 4, Unit 04 Henry, Tour 2, Shield No. 2698.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jonathan, if you'd begin.

A. We had just signed on to the unit, we were heading to our 89 status, and my partner realized he had forgot a piece of his personal equipment back at the station. We immediately turned back around, came back to the station, retrieved the equipment. On our way back to our 89 status, we reported to the corner of Clinton Street and Madison Street. We were approached by about upwards of 75 to 100 people pointing and just extremely hysterical, and when we looked down Madison Street, it was a straight shot into the World Trade Center complex and there was a crater taken out of the upper floors, there was a heavy smoke and fire condition, debris was still coming down, and with that

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the radio transmissions started to come in from other units with the priority message. Being the HAZTAC unit, we felt we needed to respond in on the scene. So we immediately went to the 63 status, tried to advise the dispatcher as best as possible. There was a lot of radio traffic.

We proceeded down Madison Street to where it comes into Pearl and then Pearl Street comes down and around the back side of the World Trade Center on the east side and turns into I believe it's Water Street. It runs into Water Street, if I'm not mistaken. We were coming across Water Street and I remember there was a Fire patrol vehicle No. 3 in front of us that we followed in to the scene.

When we got down around the ferry terminal, because we were trying to get into the staging area set up by the conditions boss, it became apparent that it was impossible. Traffic conditions were extremely tight, there were people everywhere, and we proceeded north, I believe, the wrong way, if I'm not mistaken, on Broadway, got up to about -- I want to say Dey Street or one of the side streets, very small street, ducked down to Trinity Place and proceeded north on Trinity Place to Church, and we parked somewhere



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between Dey Street and Fulton Street. It seemed like the safest area at the time considering where the building was, where we had the most amount of patients. They were all exiting heading away from the Trade Center complex. We tried to get in touch with our conditions boss to let him know where we were, but radio traffic and patient care was making that relatively impossible.

I remember there were many units on the scene. I don't remember who exactly was there. I remember we were treating several patients immediately. There was a burn patient, a jumper patient, a lot of trauma. I had gone back to my unit to get, I believe, the second oxygen tank or another piece of my personal protective equipment when we heard a second explosion, and when we looked up, the second Trade Center had been hit. With that, my partner, I believe, took off running away from the debris north on Church Street and I took off running down Dey Street and I was assisting people because it was quite chaotic.

We were picking up people who were getting trampled on Dey Street, or least I was and I believe a police officer was, and we got halfway in, we stopped,

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and my partner, I believe, was with the unit and he was down Fulton Street somewhere. We both -- I think it was a police officer and I. I don't remember his name or his shield -- ran back down the street and with that the patient count had tripled, if not more. There were more people coming up to us, more people injured.

With that we received a police officer with a very serious arm injury. He was almost amputated by a piece of shrapnel. With that we also received a burn patient, a lady who had walked down from the 78th floor, believe it or not, with third-degree burns head to toe. I don't know if I could stand as badly as she was burned and she was walking. We had a lady who was complaining of chest pain and chest discomfort. Some vital signs indicated she had some sort of cardiac event transpiring, and I believe we had one more soft tissue injury patient. We proceeded in loading them up, transporting them, providing the best care possible.

I made the decision to go to Cornell Hospital. There was a burn center as well as a trauma center. It was also not as close to the hospitals that would have been overrun. So to try to space out patients, I took them uptown. I remember when we got

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to the hospital everybody was on standby and waiting. We off-loaded our patients. I transferred care to the best of my ability.

I was monitoring the radio and they said that the No. 2 tower had collapsed. With that I expedited my ER time tenfold. I started heading back down the FDR towards the scene when I heard the second tower had collapsed.

Q. Do you remember how far down you made it on the FDR?

A. I remember we had just gotten off by the 59th Street bridge, if I'm not mistaken. We got onto 59th Street, right there by the Queensborough Bridge, went southbound on the FDR. We were coming down underneath the underpass right there where you get on the FDR and you have I believe there's the Hospital for Special Surgery, if I'm not mistaken, over the top of you at that particular part.

When we came up the FDR, all we saw was the smoke, of course. We proceeded down the FDR to South Street. We got off on South Street and tried to make it into the -- one staging area we had heard was in Battery Park and that's where we were heading for.

We got to the Brooklyn Bridge. It was myself

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and two other units. I think they were just skeleton units thrown together when this all transpired from our station. We got as far as the Brooklyn Bridge and we were enveloped in the cloud of settling debris.

With that they transmitted the message that everybody was going to report to Chelsea Piers. We turned our vehicles around and we proceeded back northbound on the FDR to 34th or 42nd Street, crossed town and staged until later that evening, when we were (inaudible).

Q. When you got up to Fulton and Church, do you recall who else was there?

A. I don't. I don't recall. There were so many units there that, in so short amount of time that, you know, you were seeing people. As far as people who are missing? Everybody that I saw at the scene I've seen later on. I saw a Cabrini crew that I've worked with later in days transpiring after this. We really weren't on scene as long as we should have been. We got overwhelmed with patients immediately and we transported before we could really get into the operation of the MCI.

Q. Any thoughts or comments that you'd like to add, like odd event that stands out in your mind?

J. MORITZ

A. No.

Q. Opinions?

A. You run very fast when buildings have  
airplanes crashing into them.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0724  
and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110159

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER HAYDEN

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

P. HAYDEN

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 25th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0541 hours. I'm conducting an interview with...

EMT HAYDEN: Peter Hayden, EMT, Battalion 4.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 4 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Peter, if you'd begin with when you found out about the assignment.

A. I had a day off and my brother had woke me up to show me the news, and I had saw the news and what had happened and right away I grabbed my equipment, got dressed and went in to work. I got into Manhattan about 9:30 and I was looking for the EMS command post, which I was told was on West and Chambers. While I was walking over there, World Trade 2 began to come down, and I ran away from the scene and got caught in the dust cloud that put a darkness over us and it was hard to breathe. We helped people into buildings, after that onto buses down to Battery Park, and there was nothing really to do for the patient except get them water. So we were just retrieving water for them.

A half hour later, a couple of EMTs and I

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decided to go back and help some more people back into the buildings of the New York Downtown Athletic Club, and people started running again because 1 World Trade began to come down. So we ran again and the same thing happened, darkness, cloud of smoke, people were having trouble breathing, get them inside, onto buses, putting them down to Battery Park. From there we just kept getting water.

From there I walked up Albany and I ran into another off-duty EMT from this battalion. I'm not sure of his name. What we did was we heard over the radio that there was staging down at Battery Park, so we had emptied a couple of ambulances of the equipment and put them into one ambulance and drove it over to Battery Park. I stayed there for a few hours and just waited and we were giving water to firefighters and police officers that had ventured over, and that was basically my role for the day.

Q. How did you get into Manhattan?

A. I had driven to the tunnel, the Battery Park Tunnel. A lot of us left personal cars and I pulled over and I hopped into a Suburban, a Fire Department vehicle, and they had transported me through.

Q. Do you remember the number of the vehicle or



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anything like that?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Did it have a battalion number on the side?

A. No, I don't remember.

Q. But it wasn't an EMS Suburban?

A. No, it was Fire Department.

Q. You came through the Battery. How far up towards the Trade Center, if you remember, did you get when you got out of the Suburban?

A. I think they let us off at West Street and Albany.

Q. West Street and Albany. Okay.

You said you'd heard command was up on West and Chambers?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you coming straight up the West Side Highway?

A. Yes.

Q. While you were on the West Side Highway, do you remember approximately where you were when the first tower came down?

A. I was in between Albany and Cedar. I hadn't gone very far because I was asking around where the staging area was.

P. HAYDEN

Q. Right.

A. I didn't see any other EMS personnel around.

Q. When the first tower came down, do you remember where you went?

A. I ran straight south on West Street, and I guess I had reached about a block, I guess around Carlisle Street, whatever this is, and I had jumped next to a divider. I made it to the Downtown Athletic Club, where there were dozens upon dozens of people with several problems just trying to breathe. The most we could do for them, because nobody really had tech bags with them, was just get them water and we were just handing out bottles of water and that was the most we could do for these people.

Q. When you came back up towards the site, you said you had basically stripped down a couple of ambulances to get one stocked?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where that was?

A. No, I'm not exactly sure where that was, but it was maybe between Washington and Greenwich. It was outside of a Chase Manhattan Bank. There were a few abandoned ambulances and they were locked. So I saw somebody breaking into the ambulance. He happened to

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be an EMS personnel from this battalion. He said, help me, we'll get all the equipment onto this bus, there's keys in it, and we'll take it over to Battery Park because we heard over the radio that there was staging down there. So that's what we did.

Q. Do you remember what vehicle number it was, by chance?

A. I don't remember, no.

Q. With those vehicles, it was just you and the other EMT?

A. And there was a guy from New Jersey who said he was an EMT from over there and he helped us.

Q. Do you remember who the other EMT was from the battalion?

A. His first name is Walter.

Q. Walter. Do you know his last name?

A. No.

Q. When you came back, you got that ambulance down there, and was it while you were down at Battery Park that the second tower came down?

A. No. I had taken the ambulance after the second tower came down.

Q. After the second tower came down. Do you remember where you were when the second tower came

P. HAYDEN

down?

A. I was around the same area.

Q. Still in the same area? Okay. Do you recall seeing any other EMS officers?

A. Not officers.

Q. Or EMS personnel --

A. Yes.

Q. -- that you know the names of?

A. No, I don't know their names. They weren't from this battalion, I know that. We all started helping. There was a bus and we were helping civilians get onto the bus.

Q. An ambulance or a city bus?

A. It was a city bus.

Q. Okay.

A. We were getting people on there so they could transport them down to the ferries.

Q. All at that point minor injuries?

A. Yes. I didn't see any injuries.

Q. Nothing?

A. Just people complaining, you know, thirsty from dust that they were breathing in.

Q. Does anything anything stand out in your mind as just an odd event or something like that that sticks

P. HAYDEN

in your head from that day or any comments or opinions you'd like to add about it?

A. No. I mean, I didn't even actually get to look at the towers collapsing because I pretty much heard them, looked up, saw it and turned around and ran, and it was just get people water and get them on the bus and get them out of there.

Q. Okay. That's pretty much it, unless there's something else you'd like to add.

A. I spent the rest of the day looking for my father, who is a fireman.

Q. Did you find him?

A. Yes.

MR. RADENBERG: Thank you, Peter.

EMT HAYDEN: Thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0549 hours and the interview is concluded.

PERUGGIA

File No. 9110160

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS DIVISION CHIEF JOHN PERUGGIA

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. PERUGGIA

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 25, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina conducting an interview. The time now is 0835 hours. Your name?

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: Also sitting here on the interview.

Q. Your name sir?

A. John PERUGGIA.

Q. What is your rank and title?

A. EMS Division Chief, in charge of planning for the Chief of Department's office.

Q. Can you tell me on September 11, 2001 what took place that day?

A. At approximately 8:50 in the morning I was on my way in to work in my assigned Department vehicle. At that point in time I was on the Staten Island Expressway, just before the Verrazano Bridge. I received a telephone call from one of my staff people, EMT Richard Zarrillo, on the Department cell phone. He indicated to me that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center. The Chief was leaving the building. Chief Nigro, my immediate boss, was leaving the building, along with Chief Ganci and he asked me for some direction. I told him and told him to tell

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the rest of the staff that was in headquarters, just to stand fast. My ETA was approximately 10 to 15 minutes and that we would just wait a little bit and see.

Shortly thereafter, maybe a few minutes, I was on the Verrazano Bridge approaching mid span. I was able to see visually the World Trade Center and the extent of the damage and fire coming from the tower, which was struck. At that point I realized that it wasn't maybe just a small private aircraft that may have struck the building, but something much more significant and this had the potential to be a catastrophic type incident.

Being familiar with the World Trade Center complex and the extent of chaos that could occur during a tragedy, as I was present shortly after the bombing in 1993, I called EMT Zarrillo back on his cell phone. I directed him to round up the rest of the staff, which consisted of a Captain and two Lieutenants, Captain Abdo Nahmod, Lieutenant John Nevins and Lieutenant Brad Mann and tell them to start making their way over to the World Trade Center. Whatever it was that hit the building from what I was seeing at my location, I knew that their assistance would be needed.

At that point I hung up the phone, put my



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emergency lights on the vehicle, got behind an ambulance or between an ambulance and a police car and our entire little package was now en route to the incident.

Moments later I got a notification on my Department pager to call the fire operations center. I immediately called them. They advised me that the Office of Emergency Management had been activated. I am the person in operations who is responsible for staffing OEM or the Police Department's command and control center. I told them that I would respond in. I gave them directions to notify the fire First Division to have them start out a fire rep. I also asked them to page Captain Nahmod and EMT Zarrillo and have them redirect themselves to OEM.

I pulled my car over to the side, when I got off the Verrazano Bridge. I grabbed my Department radio from the trunk, turned it on to the frequency and advised the dispatcher that I was responding. I continued then in on my response. As I was passing through the Battery Tunnel, probably around midway through the Battery Tunnel, I heard the report come over the radio that a second plane had struck the second tower. At that point I realized to myself that

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this wasn't just an accident, but more than likely some sort of terrorist event.

I came out of the Battery Tunnel and as soon as I came out, I parked my car immediately on the western side of northbound West Street between Rector and West. I'm going to mark that on the map with a number one. I put my boots on. I put my EMS safety coat on, my helmet, grabbed the radio and a pad and began to walk my way up West Street. My initial intent was to pass through the site, make contact with the Chief at the command post and advise them that I was en route to 7 World Trade Center, the Office of Emergency Management, to provide staffing, as it was now activated.

Q. As you were walking into the scene, the second plane had just hit --

A. Just moments.

Q. What were you observing?

A. It was very chaotic on the street. There were lots of people running around. There was heavy fire and smoke emanating from both towers in the World Trade Center, the upper floors. As I walked up the street, I was being passed by police and firefighters heading in both directions, some towards the site and

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some away from the site. I passed over some pieces of what appeared to be aircraft wreckage, fuselage, whatever, some body parts and bodies in various states, either people from the building or the airplanes. You couldn't tell. They weren't intact.

As I approached Albany Street, I crossed over to the southbound side of West Street because there was debris coming down from the building, people were running from the building and also it was very dangerous. So for my own safety I crossed on to that side and proceeded to walk northbound on West Street. As I made it to in front of what would be 1 World Trade Center, I'm going to mark that number 2 on the map, maybe just south of the north bridge, there was the inter-agency command post or at least the Fire Department command post. I saw Chief Ganci, I saw --

Q. Inside the lobby?

A. No, this was on the southbound side of West Street, you know, in front of like the World Financial Center, across the street from the building. I saw Chief Ganci, I saw Chief Nigro. There were a number of other people. I really wasn't paying attention. I made a verbal contact with Chief Ganci and Chief Nigro. I advised them that I was en route to 7 World

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Trade. OEM was active. I had already given directions to two of the staff to respond there, as well as a representative from the fire First Division.

I told them that if any of them had appropriate protective gear with them, once we got settled, I would release as many people from there as necessary to maybe help support the operations. We didn't need lots of stuff up there.

At that point I made contact with Captain James Yakimovich. He's a fire Captain who was detailed to headquarters with us for a little while. He was on a special assignment. He was in personnel on Washington Street. He was writing the fire Lieutenant's exam or whatever. He was in civilian clothes. He came out to the site when he heard what happened. He has experience at staffing OEM. I have used him on a number of occasions. I said Jimmy, you don't have gear with you. Why don't you come with me to OEM and if the First Division rep has gear we will release them.

So both of us were preparing then to leave the command post and make our way northbound on West Street to Vesey and then we would go to OEM. At that point Chief Ganci placed his hand on my shoulder and

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told me that I should be careful walking over there because there was stuff falling off the building. I told him not to worry about it. I was a big boy.

I reached 7 World Trade Center. We walked into the lobby and we were going up the escalators to the main level. I checked in at the security desk. As we reached the top of the escalators, there were lots of people running down the escalator on the promenade. I spoke to one of the Deputy Directors and as I was speaking with him, I believe it was Deputy Director Rotanz, who is a Fire Department Captain on detail over there, Captain Nahmod and EMT Zarrillo approached as well. They had indicated that the building was being evacuated.

I questioned as to what the nature of the evacuation was. I was told that it was not because of what was occurring across the street. No one feared that the building was in any danger as a result of two airplane attacks and subsequent fires, but that there were reports of a third plane that had been hijacked. It was unidentified, the location, and they thought it may be coming in for an additional strike. Therefore, they were evacuating the building.

We proceeded down to the lobby where the

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various agency representatives were present. We collectively started to set up in the lobby and try to think of strategies to where we could move the inter-agency cooperation effort.

At that point, I also had a face to face discussion with Battalion Chief Mike Maggio from the First Battalion. He was the person who was sent up to be the rep at OEM. Mike is someone who assists us on lots of our event planning. He was detailed there. He didn't have any gear with him. He was a light duty Chief on administrative assignment there. So I told Captain Yakimovich that we are not going to send a Chief back. At that point he indicated that he was going to run over to 10 and 10 and secure gear and then report back to the command post and assist the Chief there. I told him that would be fine. I didn't need a lot of people inside. They needed more help outside.

As we were having discussions in the lobby as to what to do with OEM, a number of people came in the lobby as patients. Captain Nahmod and EMT Zarrillo started to look at them, put them off to the side and talk to them. At that point I stepped outside. I was going to request some EMS resources and I had face to face contact with Captain Mark Stone of the EMS 8

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Battalion.

Q. What kind of patients were you seeing?

A. There was two or three people who had smoke inhalation. There was another person who was bleeding significantly from his lower leg and unable to stand. He was trying to limp and crawl.

Q. They came from outside?

A. Yes. Later it was determined that he had a fracture of his leg, so we put him on a chair and the other people, we put them off to the side. I ran into Captain Stone. He had, I believe it was two EMTs with him. I told him that -- he was in his full gear and radio. I directed him to respond over, report into the EMS command post and I told him that I put Captain Nahmod in charge of whatever little treatment sector that we would establish here in the lobby.

Q. Where was the EMS command post?

A. I don't know where the EMS command post was at that time. Again I didn't hear much. There was lots of stuff going on the radio. My mission at that time was not that of an EMS Chief responding to the operation. My mission was, as the Chief of Planning for the Fire Department, to respond in to handle the agency liaison stuff.

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I told Captain Stone he could respond over to the EMS command post so he could take a field assignment or whatever, since he was appropriately dressed. EMT Zarrillo and Captain Nahmod responded from headquarters without turnout gear, helmets or -- EMT Zarrillo had his helmet with him. So Captain Abdo Nahmod established a treatment center. I requested over the Citywide radio for two BLS units to respond to my location at 7 World Trade Center where we established treatment.

At that point I continued to liaison with my counterparts over at OEM. A short while later, just maybe a few moments, Dr. Asaeda, Office of Medical Affairs, and the EMT or paramedic that was with him, showed up. I told him we were seeing a number of people. In other words, more than 3 at that point in time, but again I wasn't directly involved, so I couldn't tell you the number. He said fine. He said he would stay over at our location and work with us there. We were in close proximity to the building. If you are familiar, I'll mark it with number 3 on the map, in front of 7 World Trade Center.

Directly across the street there are some escalators that come down from the promenade. There is



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also an overhead pedestrian walkway that connects the World Trade Center plaza to the lobby of number 7. There was people coming down both exits. So it was a good position for us to find people who may require medical attention and get them into a secured area of the lobby. I didn't have any EMS people working out on Vesey Street proper, because it was not a safe location. There was people jumping out of the windows of the World Trade Center. We were witnessing that. There was debris falling down from the north tower and making its way on to the street and promenade where we were located.

A few moments after Dr. Asaeda arrived and started talking to Captain Nahmod about the patients, a gentleman from the building identified himself as a security person or a security director. He asked me if there is anything that we needed or he could provide me with regard to the EMS. We questioned him as to the ability to open up the loading bays which are associated to number 7 World Trade Center. The entrances are located directly under the pedestrian foot bridge. I figured it was protected there, so debris wouldn't fall down. He said he would do that. I directed Captain Nahmod to move the patients into

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that area. Again, the lobby of number 7 is all glass facade. I was concerned that if something should come off the building, go through the glass or hit the glass, we would have an extraordinary amount of patients in addition to what was already being seen.

Further we took everyone from OEM and moved them to what would be the most southeasterly corner inside that first floor entrance of the 7 World Trade. There is a big granite or marble security desk and we started to establish around that as we were trying to figure out what we were going to do.

At that point again, I went out front to see what was going on and where the ambulances I had requested were. I had a face to face with Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen. He was there with his driver. He was wearing his protective gear and his helmet. He questioned me as to -- I told him I was there for OEM, operating in the lobby, that the building was being evacuated and the nature of that. He indicated if I knew the whereabouts of the Mayor. I told him that as I was approaching OEM and coming up Vesey Street, I saw a large contingency of gentlemen in suits exiting down Vesey Street proceeding north on West toward Barclay. I recognized some of the people

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in that group as staff and TAs for the Mayor. I told him more than likely that was probably the direction the Mayor went.

He asked me what was going on. I told him what was going on. I told him where the command post was and that Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro and I had just spoken a few minutes earlier at that location. He said okay and he proceeded then westbound on Vesey towards West.

Q. Who was he with, was he with some of his aides?

A. He was with his driver or somebody again, I don't remember exactly who he was with. Time proceeded. We were listening to the radio for updates of what was going on. Our patient count was probably a half dozen to a dozen at that point. We had maybe three or four EMTs working under Captain Nahmod with Dr. Asaeda. We had a whole treatment center set up inside those bays. They got folding chairs from the building security.

They had back boards, they had oxygen. It was working out real nice. Everyone was stable so there was no rush to start screaming for additional ambulances. I felt at that point we were in a fairly

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secure location in those bays. That was one less concern that I needed to be worried about at that point.

Several minutes passed by. I then encountered Chief Nigro in front of the building.

Q. What building was he in front of?

A. In front of 7 World Trade Center. He indicated he was in the process of doing a perimeter survey of the complex to get a good grip on the extent of damage in the fire. I guess he would then bring that back and he and Chief Ganci were going to discuss strategy. We spoke for several minutes. I briefed him on everything that was going on, where the Fire Commissioner had gone, that the Mayor was out and the building was evacuated. Told him about treatment. Told him that I was the liaison. Told him that I would keep Chief Ganci abreast of any significant information that was provided.

He thanked me and told me to be careful. He continued westbound on Vesey Street towards Church. He continued his perimeter search. Shortly thereafter, I noticed three firefighters operating on the southbound side of Vesey directly underneath the pedestrian promenade, between the pedestrian bridge and the

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escalators. One of them signaled over to me. I went over to talk with them. I noticed they were without an officer. They told me they got separated from their officer when they were operating up on the plaza. I don't recall what company they were from. I do remember that at least one, if not two of them, were probies, by the orange plates on the helmet.

They indicated that there was lots of people on the plaza, that they thought were dead and people were jumping out and said you know, what should we do. I indicated to them that if people were jumping out, more than likely they were correct, the patients were dead. There was nothing that anybody could do for them and that in light of what was going on, operating on the plaza wasn't safe for them.

I further went on to tell them that since they were separated from their officer it was probably a good idea if they were to proceed eastbound on Vesey towards Church. There were some several companies, I noticed, operating up on Church and Vesey. I told them they could hook up with one of those companies or officer. At least this way they would be with a group, they would be accounted for.

They were in the process of securing a

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hydrant and then they said they would move on. At that point I went back into the building. I was in a discussion with Mr. Rotanz and I believe it was a representative from the Department of Buildings, but I'm not sure. Some engineer type person, and several of us were huddled talking in the lobby and it was brought to my attention, it was believed that the structural damage that was suffered to the towers was quite significant and they were very confident that the building's stability was compromised and they felt that the north tower was in danger of a near imminent collapse.

I grabbed EMT Zarrillo, I advised him of that information. I told him he was to proceed immediately to the command post where Chief Ganci was located. Told him where it was across the street from number 1 World Trade Center. I told him "You see Chief Ganci and Chief Ganci only. Provide him with the information that the building integrity is severely compromised and they believe the building is in danger of imminent collapse." So, he left off in that direction.

Q. They felt that just the one building or both of them?

A. The information we got at that time was that

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they felt both buildings were significantly damaged, but they felt that the north tower, which was the first one to be struck, was going to be in imminent danger of collapse. Looking up at it, you could see that, you could see through the smoke or whatever, that there was significant structural damage to the exterior of the building. Very noticeable. Now you know, again, this is not a scene where the thought of both buildings collapsing ever entered into my mind.

I was there in 1993, 14 minutes after the bomb went off. I operated some 16 hours at the building and with all the post-incident critiques and debriefings with various agencies. We were always told by everyone, the experts, that these buildings could withstand direct hits from airplanes. That's the way they were designed. They went through all of this architectural stuff, way beyond the scope of my knowledge.

It was hit by an airplane. That's okay. It's made to be hit by an airplane. I mean I think everyone may have believed that. We were all told years ago it was made to be hit by an airplane.

Some amount of time passed by, probably not long, again, I wasn't checking my watch. Actually we

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were just really disgusted, maybe we were going to move what we were going to do and how we were going to try to coordinate. Things were hectic. We didn't have the tools that we normally have to communicate with our agency, you know, cellular phones were not working properly, radio was very difficult to get through. I work for the Chief of the Department, I don't have a fire ground radio, so I had no direct communications with my boss at that time, which is one of the reasons I needed to send EMT Zarrillo with that message, which I felt was very significant, to the command post.

Just moments before the south tower collapsed and, you know, when it happened we didn't know it was the south tower. We thought it was the north tower. There was a reporter of some sort, female with blond hair and her cameraman, an oriental fellow. They were setting up outside 7 World Trade Center, just east of the pedestrian bridge. I told them it would probably be better off to be set up under the bridge. At least it was protected. I was just about to enter a dialogue with her when I heard a sound I never heard before. I looked up and saw this huge cloud. I told him run. I grabbed the female, I threw her through the revolving doors of number 7. We were proceeding inside. She



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fell to the ground. I helped her out, I pushed her towards the direction of where we were all in the south corner and there was a little doorway behind that desk which led into the loading bays.

Everybody started to run through that. Never made it to that door. The next thing that I remember was that I was covered in some glass and some debris. Everything came crashing through the front of number 7. It was totally pitch black.

Q. Were you injured?

A. Yes, I saw some stuff had fallen on me. I didn't believe that I was injured at that time. I discovered later on I was injured. I had some shards of glass impaled in my head, but once I was able to get all this debris and rubble off of me and cover my face with my jacket so that I could breathe, it was very thick dust, you couldn't see. We heard some sounds. We reached out and felt our way around. I managed to find some other people in this lower lobby. We crawled over towards the direction where we thought the door was and as we approached it the door cracked open a little, so we had the lights from the loading bay. We made our way over there. The loading bay doors were 3 fourths of the way shut when this happened, so they

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took a lot of dust in there, but everyone in those bays was safe and secure. We had face to face contact with Chief Maggio and Captain Nahmod. They told me -- I said do whatever you need to do, get these people out of here. Go, go towards the water.

They proceeded to evacuate that group along with some secret service people.

Q. How did they get out, did they go out the loading bay?

A. I believe what happened was they opened the bay and they went out and they proceeded south on Vesey. The phone building is the next building adjacent to the east on Vesey and that had an exterior scaffolding set up on it and overhead protection. And I believe that's the way, speaking to Captain Nahmod later, that they moved the people. Again I didn't go with them. Myself and Phil Parr, the Battalion Chief detailed here to headquarters, I don't know how he ended up.

Q. At this point the south tower is down?

A. We didn't know that, but it was the south tower that was down. Phil Parr, Battalion Chief, again he had no protective equipment whatever. I'm not sure how he ended up there. I think he was detailed here to

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headquarters and he made his way over there. He used to be a Deputy Director of OEM. So he made his way there. I didn't initially see him, but when it was all over, me and Phil found one another. We grabbed some hand lights from some Port Authority guys.

Q. What did you think had happened?

A. I thought that part of the building or the facade of the building had collapsed. You know, it was too dusty to see outside, so we didn't know what happened, but I knew something real bad happened. I knew that everyone that we had in the lobby, or we thought everyone was accounted for. Again, there was a lot of rubble in the lobby, probably a few feet. The facade was all broken. Me and Phil grabbed some hand lights and the people who were still there at ground level, we directed them to the door where there were guys who were going to lead them out. Some Port Authority and some secret service, you know, they were housed at number 7. Captain Nahmod and Battalion Chief Maggio, they were going to lead that group of people. Probably in excess of 30 or 40 people out of the building.

Me and Phil then proceeded up the escalators. We walked up the escalators with our

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lights, even though we couldn't see anything with the lights that we had acquired. We reached the top of the escalators. We ran into another Port Authority officer who had a light. We told him to stand fast at the top of the escalators and just keep waving his light, you know, back and forth in a side to side motion, and that we were going to perform some search of that mezzanine level, I guess would be best to call it, or concourse level, whatever.

You know the level where the foot bridge connects, whatever. We found maybe a half dozen or so people out there. We told them to cover their heads and their faces with, you know, their shirts or clothes or whatever to help them breathe and to walk towards the Port Authority light. A few minutes after we were unable to see --

Q. Was that building already evacuated for the most part?

A. When we got there it was in the process of evacuation, so for the most part, with the exception of some rescuers that were still upstairs doing evacuation, it was fairly empty. We didn't see anybody else or hear anybody else on that level. We told the Port Authority cop that he could make his way down.

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Just make sure that everyone else had got out. He being most familiar with the building, you know, the Port Authority complex.

We made our way to the doors which led to the pedestrian bridge, both myself and Chief Parr, as I said, I'm talking about both of us. We were able to force the door open and kick some debris out of the way. We made it to the overhead walkway and we started to walk south towards the Trade Center plaza. It became a little easier to breathe. There was still a tremendous amount of dust cloud in the air. But, at least it was open air, you know.

We looked left and right, could see the devastation on the street. We saw a couple of rigs collapsed and cars and again still not realizing what the nature was. We reached the plaza. We were underneath.

Q. You still couldn't see up if it was the building?

A. Correct, correct. We were walking underneath number 6 World Trade Center. If you have seen the pictures or are familiar with the way those buildings come, they come up and then they angle out so there is like a covered walkway path. We were there. We ran

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into a few firefighters. We told them that we were going to try to make a chain of people and if we found anybody we would get them out. There were lots of bodies on the plaza. A couple of firefighters and police officers that we saw in the rubble that we were able to get to and get out of the rubble and direct towards the people, they got out. There were a few people in the rubble that were dead, both firefighters and police officers and civilians that we knew we couldn't do anything for.

Q. You had some alive, also?

A. Yes, we assisted them out. There were pockets of fire everywhere. At that point I noticed it was unusually lit in the plaza, considering the event that happened. I looked up and saw this big gaping hole where the south tower used to be. That's the first point that I realized that the south tower had collapsed. Maybe ten or 15 stories high left of it. Probably most of it being a pile of rubble.

The fire was still engaged, lots of smoke coming out of the north tower. I was like holy shit, I can't believe that this happened. Maybe if I would have known that I wouldn't have went up on the plaza. I don't know.

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At that point I was up there with Phil. We were just searching for people. As we reached the corner of the 6 World Trade Center, the customs building, like in the plaza area when you walk in and then the building, the corner of it, we turned the corner and we saw this large mass of people. We called out to them. Phil ran to them. I rallied some ESU officers and firefighters who were down near the Vesey Street side. Told them we had a bunch of people. Some guys should come down. The rest should be able to direct them. We proceeded to evacuate several hundred civilians.

Q. Where were they coming from?

A. Most of them were coming -- it appeared they were coming out of like number 6 onto the plaza, but some were also coming from number 1 World Trade Center on the plaza area. Again, we directed them to cover their mouths with their clothing. Some people were just walking in a daze. We had to grab them and push them on their way or rip their shirt and give them something to cover. Told them not to look at the bodies that were there, not to worry about the fires or people. Just tried to focus them on getting them to the corner. I'm going to mark that number 4 on the

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map, so then they could proceed northbound along the edge of number 6 and then go down the escalators. We had some guys posted. Get them on the escalators and head them towards City Hall. Get them out of the scene.

We got several hundred people out. A few people were obviously injured. We told them they would get help when they got downstairs. Even though I knew I didn't have anyone down there, I figured at some point they would run into somebody. Their injuries weren't significant enough that they required treatment nor were we able to provide treatment. My Department radio was not working at that time. It was clogged with dirt and dust. I couldn't get it to work so I couldn't talk to anyone. I was not able to get through on my cell phone to anybody either. So we were sort of operating independently and our point at that time we were just to try to evacuate these terrified individuals.

There were one or two people who couldn't walk. We were able to get some police and firefighters and take pieces of building debris and make like little makeshift carry things and they carried some people off.



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I ran into a former Fire Department employee who used to work with me, Nick Cagliuso, who used to work in the Office of Medical Affairs. He was one of the people we evacuated. I didn't have an opportunity to talk to him. I think he worked in number 1 World Trade. I'm not sure.

There were some people we saw more towards the center of the courtyard that appeared to be trapped. One of them looked like it may have been an Emergency Service officer. We directed two firefighters and an ESU cop to go and help them. The last I saw of them they were in the process of removing that person from the rubble. I then ran into James Basile, EMS 2 Division Chief. He was at the end of this group of people.

He indicated that he was in the lobby of number one and that there were some people still in the lobby, that there was a number of fire Chiefs in there. His aide was in there and that they were making their way out another way. He had made his way out from this location. He said you know we should not be here. We have to get out of here. I said there is no one else here. Let's do that, but on the way out, I said we are going through number 7 again. That's right

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on the way there. I explained to him the story. I said I'm sure the dust has settled somewhat. I just want to do another visual to make sure everyone that was with me and that was in that area downstairs was truly out.

So we went through the foot bridge again. At that point, I got separated from Phil Parr. Me and Jim proceeded over the pedestrian bridge back into number 7.

Q. How did you get separated?

A. I didn't -- I was talking to Jimmy and I saw Phil head off one direction. I think he headed down the escalators more toward Church Street. I said I'm going back into number 7. I was going to head back towards the command post, knowing that it was on Vesey Street. We went into the lobby. I was upstairs in the mezzanine lobby and there was no one there. We even checked the little snack store there. Everyone was out. No one was hidden behind the security counters.

We made our way down the escalators, I looked around the lobby, everyone was out. Then we went into the loading bays, which were relatively clear now and dust free. We saw all the EMS equipment scattered all over the place, but there were no signs of any people

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in there. There was no debris in there so I knew that everyone in there was okay and had safely been evacuated.

We walked on out to Vesey Street under the foot bridge and we continued westbound on Vesey towards West Street, walking underneath the scaffolding of the Verizon building. When we reached the end of the scaffolding, Jimmy started to continue on to the command post. I was talking to a fire officer and I asked him if he saw a group of people with some EMS officers. I was concerned about the location of Captain Nahmod and that group of people he was treating. He said he saw a bunch of people. He saw them come out and headed north on West Street.

At that point, I believe it might have been Pete Hayden from the First Division that was operating on that corner with a number of companies. We had people hurt, we had people in the rubble. There were some ambulance crews that I saw staged on Vesey and West on the westbound side adjacent to number 3 World Financial. I guess I could mark that on your map number 5. I saw a Hatzolah ambulance and voluntary hospital ambulances. I found two or three ambulance crews scattered. We began to grab some of those people

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and move them towards the water on Vesey Street.

I said let's get them and move them with the help of some firefighters, those injured people we had moved. All of their vehicles that were right there on the corner were rendered useless, as were a number of fire apparatus. I know I saw a collapsed unit on the corner over there that was crushed and dilapidated. There were some other vehicles over there.

Again, I couldn't get through on the radio. I was standing on the corner of Vesey and West. I was about to make my way towards the command post. I noticed that the north bridge, I believe the north bridge, was still intact at that point. Again, you know, at this point things get a little cloudy. I was on Vesey and West. I looked up, I saw the north tower fully involved. I saw number 6 World Trade Center fully involved with fire. I started to make my way to the command post when I heard that horrible sound again, you know, that whining screeching jet engine.

I looked up and at that point I knew the north tower was coming down. I made an immediate about face and I started to run as quick as I can.

Q. Where were you standing exactly?

A. West and Vesey, just south of Vesey Street on

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West. Maybe north of the pedestrian bridge, a couple of hundred feet north of the pedestrian bridge, right at the corner.

I turned around and started to run north on West Street. My focus was run as quick as you can.

Q. Were you there by yourself at that time?

A. I was by myself at this point. I said this is it. Run for your life.

Q. Couple of minutes earlier you saw Chief Hayden. Was anybody else there when you saw him?

A. Couple of fire officers.

Q. No other high ranking people?

A. No, because everyone else, when I last saw them was still down at the command post, that's the direction I was headed. I was concerned about Zarrillo, Ganci and all those people, but at this point I turned off and I ran. My focus was that area two feet wide in front of me and 6 feet down. Nothing in my way. Nothing I'm going to trip over and run as fast as I can.

I made it maybe a couple of hundred feet and I heard someone scream out, Chief, Chief. I turned my head to the left, I saw a firefighter, he was signaling me over. There was an engine and a ladder parked on

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the southbound lanes of West Street adjacent to the curb; maybe midway, probably around Barclay Street, midway between Vesey and Murray on that side. Probably around Barclay Street. So I ran in his direction. There was an opening maybe a foot and a half wide between the two apparatus. He pushed me in. He was behind me. He said, "We got to get under, we got to get under. Quick, we don't have time." He threw me to the floor, began to crawl under the rear, from under the rear step of the engine. I believe it was 23, but it could have been 22, the apparatus.

Then I saw him dive to make his way underneath the rear of the ladder, at which point everything went black. The thunderous roar continued, for what seemed like five minutes, but it was probably just seconds. I was unable to breathe. I was unable to see. The dust was in my eyes, I had them shut. I couldn't breathe, I took my helmet, pulled it over my face to give me some confined breathing space.

Q. Were you under the engine?

A. I was up under the rear step of the engine, when I heard screaming from the direction of where the firefighter was. I heard some other muffled sounds and then everything was just still and quiet. At that

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point I realized I was trapped under the engine. I didn't think that I would ever get out. I thought that I was dead. I thought I was buried under a hundred stories of rubble under some fire truck.

I was able to move my right leg, but I was unable to move my left leg. I felt a lot of weight on it and I couldn't really move much. All the dirt and dust came under, debris, so I was sort of pinned like this with the helmet. I tried to control my breathing. All sorts of things go through your head at that point.

Several minutes went by. Again, I couldn't tell you how long. I felt some tugging on my leg. Next thing I know, I was pulled out from under the rig, it was a firefighter and an ESU cop. He said you all right, you all right. I said "I'm okay, I'm okay, how about you guys, are you okay?" I couldn't really see or breathe and I was choking. I walked around the side of the rig and popped the CFR compartment. It was open and I just sort of felt in there. I felt some sterile water bottles. I threw it on my face. Threw a couple of swigs to spit out all the dirt and then I realized I was okay.

I realized that, I looked down and saw the

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devastation, the pedestrian bridge collapsed, the north tower collapsed, people just all over the place.

Q. How about the other firefighter?

A. We looked under the truck. There was a lot of rubble under there. We didn't see him. We didn't see any sign of him. So I don't know if he was all the way under buried. I did read a report later that they found some guys under trucks that were dead. I don't know if that was him or not.

I started to walk north towards Murray Street and then I said no, let me turn around and head back to the command post.

MR. CASTORINA: Before you go any further, why don't we switch sides on the tape before it stops running. It's almost over. Why don't we just flip sides.

Time is now 9:15. This is side two. The interview continues with Chief John PERUGGIA.

A. So, I got out of there, cleaned up my face. I was able to see and breathe. I offered water to a number of firefighters and police officers that were in the area. They all took some of the water and cleaned off their face a little. I went back to the CFR compartment, grabbed some more water. I threw it to



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the guys, grabbed a pair of gloves for my hands and also grabbed some 6 inch cling, wrapped it around my face to give me some breathing protection.

I started to walk north towards Murray Street, maybe ten or 20 steps. I said, you know, let me go back to the command post instead of wandering around helplessly. I'm sure that things are chaotic now. I made the turn, I started to walk south towards Vesey Street and saw that --

Q. How heavy was the rubble at that point, in that location?

A. It was pretty significant. Actually it was like the more south I proceeded, the more and more rubble there was. Huge amount of fire, smoke, saw the pedestrian bridge collapse and at that point I had no idea where the command post now was. If there even was a command post. I turned around and started to walk north. I noticed, on the northbound direction of West Street, a Suburban. It was running because the lights were on, couple of hundred feet north of where I was. So, I figured let me make my way over there. Maybe there are some radios I could use and talk to somebody.

Q. At this point the whereabouts of OEM were?

A. Everyone was scattered.

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Q. Last they were by 7?

A. We were all in there. I knew that they all got out. All the people that were there with us.

Q. At this point Chief Ganci, you had no idea --

A. I had no idea about Chief Ganci. No idea about him. The last time I saw Nigro he was on the other side of the complex. I didn't know where EMT Zarrillo was. I know that my last direction to him was go to Ganci. I was clearly concerned about him. Besides the fact that I directed him, he works for me. We are friends for some 15 years and I am friends with his wife longer and I was really concerned about him. I didn't know where Captain Nahmod was. Again, I had directed him and again we were friends and I had those concerns as well.

I started making my way towards this Suburban vehicle. It was an EMS Suburban, the star of life was on the rear window. I ran into Mike Butler, Chief of Fire Prevention. He was making his way south. I said Chief are you all right. He said yes, how about you. I said fine. I said where is the command post, because everything down there is destroyed now. He said the command post is wiped out; everyone is gone. He said we need to set up a command post. It's just me and you

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so let's get started.

At that point we proceeded north to Murray Street. He was on the fire radio. I ran over, grabbed the EMS Suburban, pulled up to Murray Street, was trying to get through on the radio. I finally got through when we decided that we were going to set up the command post on Warren, bring it one block north. I got through on the radio, I asked about the command post. They said they had no communications with anyone. I told them I was on the scene and proceeding to set up a command post on Warren Street.

I don't know if that message got through, because after we got on Warren Street, we ran into Joe Farrell from the New York State Health Department, EMS Bureau. He said, "Where are you headed?" I said, "Well this is the command post." Then the Chief says, "There is a gas leak, we need to go north one more to Chambers." I said, "Come on Joe, we will drive up there." We drove up to Chambers Street, right under the little Stuyvesant High School bridge. I parked the Suburban there and determined that that would be my command post. Chief Butler came up and there was a fire car that they had over there. He started setting up. I was trying to get through on Citywide. There

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was a lot of activity.

At some point I heard an EMS Chief officer, later to find out that was J.P. Martin and he was here on the Brooklyn side on the Brooklyn Bridge and he was assuming command of the operation, directing units staged in Brooklyn. I guess his impression was that no one was talking to them. They thought everyone in the Trade Center was wiped out. They didn't know what was going on. I was able to cut in on Citywide. I asked him to hit the alert tone. I remember asking him to hit the alert tone several times to clear the frequency.

I indicated to them that unless there was a higher ranking officer than myself that they were in contact with, I was on scene at the World Trade Center and was establishing the EMS command post adjacent to the Fire Department command post at Chambers Street. So they sent that message out several times. I told them that any officers that were operating on the scene should immediately be directed to report in to Chambers and West. Any ambulance crews that they had contact with that were operating in the vicinity, I asked them to have them respond in to West Broadway and Chambers, which was two blocks to the east of where we were

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located.

They sent that message out several times. Further, I tried to get them to conduct a roll call of the Chief officers so I know who was accounted for, where they may be and what types of operations. I also remember asking to them if they had contact with any officers or ambulances that were operating, to get them identified and where they were. I wanted to try to get some sense of scope on what sort of management people and/or supervisory people were on the scene, where they were and what people were doing. Again, there was tremendous disaster area down there. It was out of control and we didn't know what was going on.

Some time went by. We were trying to collect resources. Some ambulances showed up. I directed them up there. A couple of supervisors arrived and I directed one up to staging. I sent two people, I don't remember who they were, I asked them to just make their way down to Vesey Street and no further and if they saw anyone operating around there to get them up, get them out of there. I know there were people operating on Vesey Street prior to the second collapse. I said, "I want you to go down there, do a quick survey, your safety obviously first. If you find anybody get them

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up here. Let's get away from the site and let's regroup and we will go in there." Chief Butler I think was trying to do the same thing for fire.

I started to get some sense from Citywide. J.P. Martin had a group of people in Brooklyn. There was a group of people at South Ferry, I think it was Chief Steffens and I don't remember who else was down there. They told me that there was a group of people up at Chelsea Piers with Kowalczyk and Pat Scaringello. This was as time progressed.

I ran into Pete Carrasquillo, maybe after about 20, 30 minutes. He was down near the water on Chambers Street. He heard me on the radio and he said he made his way down towards Vesey Street. I said, "Pete, maybe you can make your way down there, get a forward seat and see what's going on." J.P. Martin eventually made his way to me. I made him then become the communications person for the operation post. I got in touch with Kowalczyk, maybe an hour or two later, to see if I could get him down.

I knew I was hurt. There was blood dripping down the side of my face. I was a little dazed and confused and I hadn't spoken to my family since when I first started responding in. I was concerned about the

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two guys who worked for me that were my friends as well as other people and I said I have a task in front of me, but I just needed some help. I reached out to Walter to get him down. It was a while before Walter got down. We continued the operation. We started to set up some sectors and started sometime shortly about maybe one o'clock or two o'clock or whatever. Both of us said, "You look like you are shot." He said, "Do you want me to do command and you do operations?" We then switched roles.

At some point after that we found out that McCracken was okay. He made his way back up towards, we started to regroup and implement some sort of operational plans about how we were going to do the operation.

Q. This whole time, did you see Chief McCracken?

A. I didn't see Chief McCracken until much later, maybe one or two o'clock. It was evening, and it was dark so I don't know what time, as time progressed we set up sectors. I had John McFarland go down to Vesey and West Street, with a team of guys to do forward triage. I got a communication from John. He called me on his cell phone, indicating that they found Ganci and Feehan's bodies.

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I relayed that information to Chief McCracken. We got out of our command post and I walked over and relayed that to, I believe it was Chief Nigro and the Fire Commissioner, who were at the fire command post at that point in time. At that point, you know, I was really concerned about Rich Zarrillo. I hadn't heard --

Q. Still you hadn't heard?

A. Right, and I knew he was there. I ran into Abdo at some point. He didn't know where Rich was.

Q. When did you finally find Rich Zarrillo?

A. Probably around 6:00. I didn't see Richie till after. Chief Hirth and Lieutenant Cacciola made their way down or way up from South Street at some point in time. They said that they saw Richie and he was at Chelsea Piers. At that point I knew that he was okay.

We continued the operation. I was there until 8:30 the next morning.

Q. Did you see Father Judge at any point?

A. I never saw Father Judge. The only ranking people I saw were Ganci and Nigro at the command post, the Fire Commissioner, who I briefed early on and obviously saw later on.



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Q. Okay. Anything else you want to add?

A. I just marked the map number 6, the location where I guess I was underneath the fire truck. Somewhere between Vesey and Murray around Barclay.

Q. On the second collapse?

A. Right, it was either 22 or 23 engine, I don't remember exactly, and some truck company.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time now is 0926 hours. Thank you, Chief PERUGGIA.

File No. 9110161

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT RICHARD ZARRILLO

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

R. ZARRILLO

MR. CASTORINA: Today's date is October 25th, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina conducting an interview in the office of BITS. Your name --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: -- is also accompanied with me conducting this interview.

Q. Your name, sir?

A. Richard Zarrillo.

Q. And your rank and title?

A. I'm an EMT working in fire operations as the special event coordinator.

Q. Can you tell me, on September 11th, 2001, the events that took place that day, whatever you can remember?

A. Sure. While sitting at my desk, probably just after the first plane had hit the tower, Chief Ganci had come running across the hall yelling something about a plane hitting the twin towers. Most of us thought he was joking until we looked out the window and saw one of the towers had flames coming out of it. I placed a call to Chief Peruggia to ask him his location. He told me he was just coming over the Verrazano Bridge about to get in the HOV lane. I told him maybe you want to start heading to Manhattan, I'll

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meet you in the city, this way we could hook up and do whatever we needed to do. At that point he thought I was joking. He cursed at me and hung up. Captain Nahmod was sitting next to me and he said we need to get some equipment, find out who's going, who's not going, try and make our way there.

I spoke with Chief Peruggia. He called me back and said maybe you and Abdo, Captain Nahmod, need to head into the city to be part of the command, runners or administratively, whatever we can do to help out. I was able to locate a helmet from one of the people in RCC. Captain Nahmod and I tried to find a car to get into the city. Chief Ramos was bringing us downstairs to get a pool car, so I think Commissioner Drury happened to be walking in at the wrong time and we asked him to drive us into the city.

I'm not sure of the exact time, but I believe as we were coming over the Brooklyn Bridge was when the second plane hit the second tower. We parked -- I want to say it's on like Broadway right off of Vesey Street, between Vesey and Barclay. Captain Nahmod and I started heading down Vesey Street towards where we thought the command post would be. At that time we had received a page per Chief Peruggia to go into OEM at

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No. 7 World Trade and activate our post in OEM.

Captain Nahmod and I were running down Vesey Street stepping over airplane pieces, several bodies and whatnot.

Q. Can you describe how much debris was around?

A. There was what looked like the front wheel assembly of an airplane. Unknown the size of the plane that had hit, it just looked like it was one pair of wheels on an assembly, pieces of metal with rivets in them, a few body parts scattered around.

Q. Was debris still falling?

A. Debris was falling. It looked like birds. There were people falling from the towers or jumping, whatever it was they were doing. Abdo and I went into No. 7, activated OEM, placed calls to EMS Citywide, RCC, to tell them we were there and we were activated.

Maybe five, ten minutes, not even ten minutes later, a rep from OEM came into the main room and said we need to evacuate the building; there's a third plane inbound. That was the only thing I really heard because I said, Abdo, we've got to go, and we made it down to the lobby of the building, street level, met up with Chief Peruggia in the lobby of the building. He said that there was no third plane but we needed to

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re-establish OEM right there so we can coordinate what was going on. He had already been to the command post, so he told us, and he was trying to release people back to be operational. He was looking for the Fire guy to go back in. He was there with Captain Yakimovich. In OEM with Captain Nahmod and I was Chief Maggio, who is now retired, and another firefighter from the 1st Division. We were really trying to establish OEM and a treatment sector in the lobby of the building because there were people coming around us.

Again, times are a little fuzzy initially for me. A few minutes later, John came to me and said you need to go find Chief Ganci and relay the following message: that the buildings have been compromised, we need to evacuate, they're going to collapse. I said okay. I went down Vesey Street towards West.

Q. You were by yourself?

A. I was by myself, me and my helmet and my radio. I got to the corner of Vesey and West. I found some EMS vehicles. I think I saw Chief Gombo there. I'm not really sure. I mentioned to the EMS people there, again, not knowing who they were, I said you need to get away from here, the building might collapse, we need to leave this spot.

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As I was walking towards the Fire command post, I found Steve Mosiello. I said, Steve, where's the boss? I have to give him a message. He said, well, what's the message? I said the buildings are going to collapse; we need to evac everybody out. With a very confused look he said who told you that? I said I was just with John at OEM. OEM says the buildings are going to collapse; we need to get out.

He escorted me over to Chief Ganci. He said, hey, Pete, we got a message that the buildings are going to collapse. His reply was who the fuck told you that? Then Steve brought me in and with Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan, Steve, I believe Chief Turi was initially there, I said, listen, I was just at OEM. The message I was given was that the buildings are going to collapse; we need to get our people out. At that moment, this thunderous, rolling roar came down and that's when the building came down, the first tower came down.

The command post was situated right in front of 3 World Financial, the American Express Building. The garage was open and as that rumble started and we saw it was coming down, the firemen that were in the command area, I believe most of the chiefs, we all ran

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into the garage of that building. It became dark, hard to breathe. Nobody had any equipment because most of the firemen dropped everything as they were running. It became an obstacle course to get into the garage.

Again, it's sketchy with time, but it may have been anywhere from ten to 20 minutes by the time we found an emergency exit to get out of the building. It was dark. There was no light.

Q. Who were you with at this point? Were you by yourself?

A. I had two firemen. What I did was I took about ten or 15 running steps into the garage and hugged into a corner of a wall, an indentation, and I felt like two or three guys get in behind me and actually made it a tighter huddle. The dust, the cloud came rolling in. It got dark. As the dust and the noise started to settle, we were all tapping up to see where each other were.

I met up with Chief Cassano at the stairwell, and I believe Chief Carrasquillo was around there. I know I met up with him outside on the lobby of Vesey Street from that building, when we got out. Lots of firemen, you know, faces, no names I could really identify, except for Sal.



R. ZARRILLO

We made it up the staircase into the lobby, I believe it was 3, it may have been one of those little cross lobbies that were there, and got out onto Vesey Street. I met up with EMT Mike Ober, who had been driving Chief Kowalczyk. He was his driver for a while. I met up with him. I found Chief Carrasquillo, who was with Chief Cassano, a few others, you know, faces, again, that I found, and we were walking around trying to make -- what happened? It was still cloudy, that very fine but heavy dust that was in the air.

Once I got out of the building, maybe ten minutes from there, that unforgettable rolling started.

Q. The same sound you heard earlier?

A. The same sound I heard earlier.

Q. Where were you at this point?

A. I was on West and Vesey, probably in the middle of the intersection, trying to find people that I knew. At this point I didn't know where John was, where Abdo was. I don't know what happened to No. 7. I knew the building was coming down. I watched it come down on us, but I don't know where anybody else is.

As that roar was happening on the second time around, I was running down Vesey Street towards the water with a few thoughts in my head. One, if I hit

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the water, I was swimming home, or just getting into the water for cover, if necessary. The marina was right there. I ended up making a right on North End Avenue and there was a building -- EMS, again, I know Chief Villani was there. I saw Chief Pascale later on. I believe Chief Kowalczyk was in there also. The MERV was stationed on North End Avenue for a while and I remember emergency service was on the southbound side of North End near Vesey for a while also. We made it into that building as the second one came down. Again, the clouds and all the other debris.

Q. You were protected in that building?

A. In the building.

Q. Which building was that?

A. There was a building right there on the corner. Maybe 15, 20 feet off the corner, there was an entrance into a building, and that's where -- it was mostly glass windows and we were concerned that the glass was going to implode.

Q. Did that face the river?

A. It faced the river and that was protection in my view.

Q. About a three-block distance?

A. It's actually one city block, but still that

R. ZARRILLO

cloud came over and passed and --

Q. Did it get black there, too?

A. It got really dark. Most of us were looking for cover, trying to avoid anything else that was coming down. While we were in that building, we were told -- again, I don't know where anybody is.

Q. You had no radio, right?

A. I had a 400 radio. I couldn't get through to anybody.

Q. Were you hearing anything, Mayday, anything on the radio?

A. No. The 400 -- I was on EMS Citywide and I don't know if my radio was clogged or the batteries. It could have been a hundred different things.

Q. Can you just mark on the map where you were? Just roughly.

A. We were right about here.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't know where John was. Outside of the job, John, Abdo and I are old friends and that was my concern, you know, how am I going to tell these guys' wives, we all live near each other, that I followed his direction and now I can't find either of them.

While we were in this building, we were told

R. ZARRILLO

that there was a gas main rupture or a gas leak and we needed to evacuate that building.

Q. Who told you this?

A. It was just somebody, a security guard or somebody. But then Chief Villani and all the other chiefs that were in there said we need to gather all of our equipment because they had set up a treatment area, there were ten sets of equipment with stretchers from ambulances, and we all took all that stuff out and started heading down North End hoping to find -- or maybe it was down toward -- no. Down North End Avenue to try and find another place we could go into.

Again, at this point there was a lot of disorientation. Nobody really was fully aware as to what was going on. The radios had gone silent, you know, guessing, because the repeater tower went down. Nobody knew what was going on. I thought I heard a helicopter. There were a lot of people running, lots of patients or would-be patients running past us.

Q. Where were they headed?

A. Anywhere they could get away from. The water.

Q. Heading away from the buildings?

A. Running north on West Street. I went into --

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there was a school not too far down from here. I meet up with Mike Cahill from Division 6 and Gerald Garcia. They were down there. The MERV had already tried to find another place to set up and was moving down North End Avenue. I think it was Garcia. We went into a school. I wanted to just wash my face off, use a bathroom, and as we were in that school building, we were told we had to evacuate that building because, again, a gas rupture. That came from one of the school officials, a name I couldn't tell you. Face? Probably not now recognize.

We made it back on to West Street, I don't remember what the cross was, and we started heading -- I heard people saying we're going to Chelsea. I heard Chief Pascale say she was going up to Chelsea Piers, we were going to try and re-establish up there, you know, do a count and try to run the operation.

When I went to that other building, I lost most of those people, except for Cahill, and then when they told us to evacuate that building, I just had to get out of there. My thoughts were that I needed to get home, get my wife from midtown and just get home for my daughter.

I got onto West Street and met up with

R. ZARRILLO

Captain Stone, Greg Brady from Division 1. I found Chief Hirth and Grace Cacciola and they said we're all going up to Chelsea, let's go re-establish our command up there, again, not knowing where anybody else was. You see the plumes of smoke, the dust cloud that was coming down, but we just really wanted to find a safe place for that. Probably about ten blocks up West Street you heard the jets flying overhead, so lots of thoughts running through people's heads, what's happening to us here?

Q. What kind of jets?

A. Military jets.

Q. Military jets?

A. Yes.

Q. This is --

A. This is right after the second collapse.

Q. After the second collapse?

A. Well, if I say 15 minutes from the time we got to that school building and started walking towards Chelsea, maybe ten, 15 minutes had passed by the time that --

Q. Half an hour?

A. Again, I do apologize for that.

Q. No, everybody has that problem.

R. ZARRILLO

A. Time wasn't --

Q. There's no perception of time.

A. It's still very surreal. There I was talking to Chief Ganci and relaying that the building is going to come down and then it came down on us. It's very bothersome.

We hitched a ride with a police van up to the Chelsea Piers. Chief Kowalczyk was there, Chief Pascale, a slew of ambulances. There had to be 50 non city ambulances up there from everywhere. I saw Captain Boyle there. I met up with Captain Pinkus. Captain Stone, myself, Brady, Chief Hirth and Grace went into the -- there was some restaurant on the edge of the Chelsea Pier area, you know, to try and clean up a little bit, use the rest room, which I needed to do a while ago. I met up with a lot of my counterparts from the Secret Service because that's where their fallback was becoming. All their agents from the building were in there.

Mark Stone said he felt his shoulder was hurt and Chief Hirth was looking to get out of there to go someplace else. He wanted to check -- I honestly don't know what was going through his head. He said I need to go away from here, I need to go get a car, I need to

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go to the division or a hospital. Whatever the case may have been, they took Captain Stone to Bellevue to be treated. He was treated and released.

Chief Pascale and Chief Kowalczyk were establishing their command, and doing this for -- you know, between chiefs and what I do now, I fell into that command structure to say, okay, I'm here, let me help you with this, and I handled staging and some other logistical issues with them for about two or three hours, and then I made my way back down to the command post. Probably within an hour of us getting up to Chelsea, Chief Kowalczyk said to me that John is okay, he heard him on the radio, and that he was going down to the command post that's been re-established to either help out or take over from him.

Then, like I said, a few hours later, Lieutenant Nevins and I made our way down south back to Chambers Street where the other command post had been established. That's really about it.

MR. CASTORINA: I think you've covered virtually everything. The time now is 1202. The concludes the interview.



File No. 9110162

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JULIO MARRERO

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is October 25th, 2001. The time now is 1849 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work with the New York City Fire Department, assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. I'm at Battalion 14 to conduct an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, assignment and shield number.

EMT MARRERO: My name is Julio Marrero with the New York City Fire Department, Battalion 14. I was assigned to 14 Charlie that day, tour 2, and my shield number is 5376.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Also present for the interview is --

MR. ECCLESTON: Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Mr. Marrero, on the morning of September 11th can you recount the events that took place that day?

A. Sure. I was sitting on 161 and Grand Concourse approximately about 9:30 in the morning

when a call came over on my KDT to respond over to Barclay and Church for a cardiac, most probably related to the World Trade Center incident.

As I was heading down to the World Trade Center, I saw a massive amount of people walking away from the building, and I saw smoke coming from both towers. I knew that one tower was hit, never knew that the second tower was hit.

I responded over to Barclay and Church where I came around and I couldn't actually get around to Barclay street because the roads were so closed off because of the amount of people walking in the streets. We couldn't actually make our turn on Barclay to get over to Church, so I went down a few blocks. I can't remember exact blocks that I went down; I would say two to three blocks, because everything was blocked off.

I finally got over to Church. When I saw Church Street, I looked up, and both towers were in flames. At this point we realized that something was terribly wrong. I looked down the block and saw that there must have been more than

three dozen ambulances, fire trucks and police cars on the street and a massive amount of rescue workers, firefighters, EMS, police officers, trying to get these people away from the buildings.

Also I was told to pull my ambulance over by one of the lieutenants so I could help to start triaging with the casualties and stuff. I was trying to explain to the lieutenant on the scene that I was trying to get to a call, an actual call that was on Barclay and Church, and he told me I can mark that a 93 because there was too many amount of buses, ambulances, to even worry about me trying to get over that way. Actually all the street was closed because of so many rescue ambulances and stuff. So it was kind of hard.

In that process of him trying to explain to me to pull my ambulance over, I heard a loud bang. We looked up, and we just saw the building starting to collapse. I looked over and started to scream at my partner, which he was inside the vehicle.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. My partner was Naomi Nacional.

I was screaming from the top of my lungs, and I must have been about ten feet away from her and she couldn't even hear me, because the building was so loud, the explosion, that she couldn't even hear me. I just saw everybody running; and she saw us running, and she took off behind us.

Q. You left your vehicle right there?

A. The vehicle was left there.

Q. Do you know approximately where it was?

A. The vehicle was approximately between I believe -- I would say between Liberty -- I'm not sure. Between Liberty and Dey, somewhere in that vicinity. We're talking about two blocks. I can't remember exactly because I was trying to actually make my way up to Barclay and Church.

Q. Would you just indicate on the map with the number 1 approximately where you remember leaving the vehicle when you got out to run.

A. I believe it was maybe over here. I think I ran down Dey. I think I ran down Dey. I'm not sure if I ran down Dey because, like I said, I couldn't move my vehicle anyway because

there was so many vehicles in the way that we couldn't move our vehicle. This happened in such a split second that the only thing we had to do to react was run for our dear lives.

I saw fire trucks. I saw firemen. I saw firemen walking in the building as this horrific --

Q. You want to pause?

(Pause.)

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The interview will be continuing the time now is 1856 hours.

Q. You left off you left the vehicle and started to run.

A. We started to run. I remember running either down Dey or Cortlandt. I'm not sure which street it was. It happened too fast. I can't remember.

In the event that the building was coming down, I also saw a massive amount of people running. The dark cloud hit us. I thought I was going to be dead. I thought I was going to die when that smoke hit us. I could see debris flying, and I started choking from the smoke because I couldn't breathe.

I fell down some subway stairs.

Somewhere I had just started walking towards -- I knew that there was a building on my right as I was running, and I knew that I had to find a void in the building so I wouldn't be hit over the head with any debris as I was running.

I was crawling on the side of the building, and I felt a void. That's when I took a step into the void, and there was actually steps. Because you couldn't see your hand in front of you, it was so dark. A thick cloud of concrete, debris, smoke, airplane fuel. It was just massive thickness.

I remember there was a void, and I stumbled down the stairs of this void. That's when I broke my foot. I broke my foot, and I did feel some pressure on my foot. My boots were kind of tight on me, and I felt them getting tighter.

All I was thinking at that moment is how am I going to get out of this situation. That was my first concern. I had to worry about myself because of my safety. This is one of the things that they taught us at the academy is try

to worry about yourself first so then you can help other people. So I was really worried about trying to get out of the situation I was in so I could get out and start helping people.

I didn't really feel my foot as much as I felt my back, because as I fell down the stairs I sprained my lower back, mostly, and that was even more. At the bottom of the stairs, I just waited a little while. I could hear people screaming inside the subway station from a distance. It was horrifying. It was really horrifying. The screams I still hear at night.

I ran out of the subway station to get help. As I ran out of the subway station, I ran down to about -- I believe the street that I ran down was to Broadway. I'm not sure -- I believe I was on Dey, but I'm not sure if it was Dey or Cortlandt, because a lot of the signs were also full of dust. So I really couldn't see that well.

I had contacts on that day, and my eyes were full of dust and they were irritated and I was completely head to toe in this dust and concrete and God knows what else we were exposed



to. I was really worried about my breathing, because I had choked up a lot of that dust and stuff.

Miraculously I saw my partner walking towards me. We embraced for a moment, we were just so glad to see each other. Once I turned around -- I was on the corner I think of Dey or Cortlandt on Broadway. I remember Broadway. I looked, and it was just an amount of overwhelming people that needed help, and I didn't have an ambulance. The ambulance was left back on Church Street, I believe, or Trinity, Church and Trinity turns into that, I'm sure.

This is where I then started to help people to the best that I could. And I felt that I needed to go back and try to get my ambulance. So my partner and I started to work towards the collapsed buildings, and this is when I saw the chaplain. I believe it's Father Judge. I believe he was there. There was another chief with him. I can't remember who the chief was. But I remember looking at the chaplain because he had his coat on, and on the bottom of the coat it said "chaplain." That's how I remember it was

the chaplain.

I saw them walking towards the collapsed building, and that's when me and my partner decided to walk behind them to see if we can go get our ambulance so we can start transporting people to the hospital.

When I really got this really deep sick feeling inside of my stomach, and I said, "Look, I don't think we can go back and get the ambulance. I think that ambulance is destroyed." As we were walking towards there, we just saw so much fire and smoke. It was a horrifying scene, and I really felt that the scene was not safe for me to go back towards that way.

So we turned around and headed back to help people. So we were making a triage right in the middle of -- we made a triage right on the street of Broadway and I believe it was Dey. Broadway and Dey, we started helping people right there on the corner. We started setting up a triage area right there.

There were no bosses. There was no one. There was just me. Then a couple of ambulances pulled up, and we just started loading

people into the ambulances. It was mayhem. From that moment on, it was just mayhem, everybody walking up to us and they were hurt some way or another.

Then we were helping these people, loading them up to the ambulance, when I heard over citywide -- I had my radio on. I heard over citywide that the second tower was leaning south, to start heading people north, it was about to go.

So as soon as I heard that over the radio, my partner was inside an ambulance trying to help people with the other EMTs, and I was trying to work with the people outside the ambulance.

When I heard that, I had told my partner to get out of the ambulance, to start heading people north, and you could tell north from south by looking at the tower that was still standing and you knew more or less where you were. Because if you were on Broadway and you looked at the tower, the north tower, you wanted to run behind it.

I started telling her to start telling

people to start moving north, and we both started -- and I realized that the ambulance, they were still in there trying to work on people. So I ran towards the ambulance, and my partner ran away from the ambulance, telling people to run north, because they were all walking toward the ambulance, because there was only one ambulance in the area and everybody was needing so much desperate help that they were all working towards the ambulance.

We started telling them to move north. She ran to tell them to move north, and I ran towards the ambulance to get them out of there, because they had no idea what was going on.

When I got to the ambulance, I told them to leave because they just said over citywide that the building was about to collapse, the second collapse. They just got out and moved. They moved that bus. I have no idea which way they went.

At that moment I just heard the second building coming down. When the second building started to come down, I started to run. Approximately I'm not sure what street. I must

have ran down Fulton Street about a block, and then I know I cut down another street. I made a left. And I just started cutting between streets like a snake in order to avoid any kind of debris or anything trying to hit me. I ran into one of the buildings that was open about two blocks down.

At this point I was in extreme pain from my lower back. My heart rate was over 200. My adrenaline was very high. My blood pressure, I have no idea how high it was, but it was extremely high. I was very nervous. I felt that I might have had -- was going to experience a heart attack.

As I opened the building door, I just saw inside the building there must have been about 30 or 40 people inside that building hiding. There was just a lot of fear. And when they saw me in uniform, everybody was like "Help me." I was like, I'm trying to help myself right now.

There was another police officer in the building also. I believe he was a bike cop, because he had his little bike uniform on and I

could tell the police officers that have the little bike uniform on. It was just me and him trying to calm the people down inside the building and trying to get them away from the collapse.

We just waited for the smoke to clear some. We got them out. That building had an exit on the other side from where I came in. We opened that exit. We got them out of the building, and we all ran to safety.

I ran over to Beekman Hospital, where I practically collapsed. I needed oxygen treatment at Beekman. I can tell you that at Beekman I saw police officers and firemen coming in, and they were -- some people were beyond recognition.

I was in Beekman Hospital on a stretcher for some oxygen treatment when I saw a cop friend of mine from the 44 Precinct come in, and he had his head busted wide open. I realized that this cop needed a stretcher more than I did. There were no stretchers. So I jumped off and I said, "Put that police officer on my stretcher."

I jumped onto another ambulance going to Bellevue Hospital, from Beekman, because they

needed to transport a patient who was in severe head trauma, severe head trauma, intubated, going from Beekman to Bellevue. I took the opportunity to help those EMTs transport this patient from Beekman Hospital over to Bellevue Hospital.

This man must have weighed about a good 450 pounds. He had massive head trauma. I don't think -- this patient was pretty much close to death when we transported him. I helped them load this patient, with a bad back, with a broken foot. My adrenaline is still going.

I never even thought about going back towards the building. I didn't want to go back towards that way, because I knew I was injured and I needed to get out of the area.

We got that patient over to Bellevue Hospital, and they treated him. The EMTs, they told me that they didn't want me going back to look for my partner because I was injured, and they wanted me in. As soon as I got to Bellevue Hospital, they grabbed a lieutenant and told them what was going on with me.

That's when I just broke down and cried at Bellevue Hospital, because it was just so

overwhelming. I just knew that what happened was horrific. It was a bombing. It wasn't an accident. I didn't know what was going on. I had no idea, no clue that two airplanes had hit the building.

I was responding right after like -- I would say after one plane hit the building. I wasn't even listening to a radio, but I was only listening to my EMS radio, not listening to 1010 Wins or anything like that, you know, where you can get information. I had no idea what was going on downtown. I was responding to a call.

That's basically my story.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview. The time is 1910 hours.



File No. 9110163

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHARLES WELLS

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. DUN: Today is October 26, 2001. The time is 1118 hours. I'm Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, also from the New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with Deputy Chief CHARLES WELLS.

Q. Sir, would you give us the story of what happened on September 11, 2001.

A. I logged on, I guess, approximately 8:30 in the morning. I was proceeding westbound on the Southern State Parkway in the vicinity of the state troopers barracks in Valley Stream when the citywide radio started becoming extremely busy with radio traffic, Brooklyn and Manhattan units coming up into the citywide radio, saying 1063, but after a few minutes I realized they were going to the World Trade Center.

Immediately got on the radio and requested permission to respond, and I was -- I received permission to respond and proceeded north on the Cross Island Parkway to the westbound LIE, where I approached what used to be the Elmhurst gas tanks area. I was able to view the Manhattan skyline to see a tower involved in fire on the upper floors.

## CHARLES WELLS

Went through the Midtown Tunnel. When I exited the Midtown Tunnel, at that time a radio message came over that a second tower had been struck by an airplane.

I proceeded through midtown traffic, got over to the west side, and parked my car on the southbound side of West Street at Barclay. There were numerous ambulances parked nearby there, numerous marked fire sedans, and I got out, I put on my gear and started walking toward where I believe the command post was, at Vesey and West.

As I was walking down the street, there was numerous apparatus. I did see Ladder 118 parked at that -- on West at Vesey. I then proceeded south of Vesey on West toward the command post, where I reported in to Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Basile, at which point they directed me to go to the southwest sector of the complex at Liberty and West Street and establish some medical treatment triage center.

As I was walking down, numerous people on the upper floors were jumping, jumping in pairs, holding hands, jumping, and they were landing -- they were landing on the ground, and then on -- also on top of the Vista International Hotel.

## CHARLES WELLS

I got down to Liberty and West. When I arrived there, there were approximately 15 EMS units -- excuse me. Approximately two to three department EMS units, numerous fire apparatus and approximately 10 or 12 Metro Care ambulances, all right up against the southwest corner of Liberty and West.

I immediately told them to re-establish on the west side of West Street, not under the pedestrian bridge, but north of the pedestrian bridge as close to Liberty Street as possible. They immediately responded to that.

Debris was falling. I immediately told them to don hard hats. Only the department EMS personnel had hard hats at that point. Metro Care, they didn't have any hard hats. I then interacted with Deputy Chief Robert Browne of the EMS command, who was directed to the same site. He directed the units over to the west side of West Street on -- on West Street by Liberty for these units to re-establish themselves in a more safe location.

As the units were driving around, they did it in a pretty quick fashion. As they were exiting their vehicles, a firefighter, assigned to OEM, a Firefighter Tim Brown, I see him exiting the Liberty Street area of

CHARLES WELLS

the complex running towards us. He came up, and he said, he said, "Chief, I have ten people on the ground floor of the 2 World Trade Center, the south tower in the lobby. They somehow managed to get themselves into the elevator and got down to the lobby, and they all have fractured legs. We can't get them out. Could you come in and get them?"

So I said, "Okay, fine." I turned around and I said, "Let me have six personnel and bring the stretchers and the back boards, and we are just going to put them on the back boards, and we will do fracture management when we get back to treatment."

Of the six that came forward -- I asked for volunteers. I said whoever wants to come in with me. Six people immediately came up, but only two had helmets, and that was the crew of 18 Charlie 2, EMT Conzo and EMT Truoccolo. I may be pronouncing his name wrong. The other four were Metro Care personnel. They had no turnout jackets. They didn't have helmets, and I said, "No, you guys stay back here and just when you see us come out with these people, you immediately take them and give us your empty stretcher, and we'll do a round robin, swapping out the equipment to get the patients out."

## CHARLES WELLS

I told Bobby Browne what I was doing. He said, "Okay, fine." He was going to remain there and wait for us to come back out and see what we have. We took the crew of 18 Charlie, and they had Firefighter Brown direct us to where he wanted us to go.

We entered Liberty Street from West Street, and we started walking down the sidewalk. We got to the point of being in between the Vista Hotel and the World Trade Center, at which point we heard a -- we felt a loud -- a very strong vibration, shaking, and a loud noise like a subway train coming through a station at speed, like a jet engine at full throttle. It was a roaring sound, and he wanted to continue down Liberty Street, and I grabbed him.

I said, "Tim, we can't go down there," and then things started to get dark, and we just ran, and there is some doorway around here, some doorway, and we ran into this doorway. We got in about, I don't know, a number of feet, and the wind velocity took us off our feet and just threw us, and then we started getting buried with debris.

Q. It threw you further into the building or --

A. Right, into the building. Actually, it actually threw us. The wind was coming from the east,

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from the east to the west, so we got into this doorway, got into something, and it just pushed us and just knocked you off your feet, like a wave hitting you at the beach, and you get stuck in the wave itself.

So we are trapped up in there now. We are separated. I'm yelling to the other guys, but you're buried in this.

Q. I know you are Haz-Mat trained. Did you have a Scott pack or no?

A. No, and then I don't have my Scott pack any more. When they disbanded ERS, the ERS unit relinquished all their equipment back to Haz-Mat operations.

Q. Okay.

A. I had my helmet on. For some reason I had my strap on, and thank God that was on, as I'll tell you later on, and I had the EMS bunker pants, and my jacket on, so it took like about 10 minutes, and I was able to dig myself to the point where I was falling down, because it turns out I was suspended off the ground. It has debris and dig, dig, dig, and you drop, drop, drop, and you dig, dig, dig, and finally I was able to burrow out of -- like about a couple of minutes like moving ahead. Couldn't breathe. Choking.

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There was oxygen, but you were breathing the dirt right in, you were eating it, so you had to keep moving around. Finally just pulled your jacket up over your face and tried to breathe inside your jacket, and then I hit a wall, and then I started to -- and I was able to stand up at that point, and the debris is now about waist level at that point, and then -- now the smoke and debris is clearing, and the whole -- you can see right out to West Street at this point or Liberty and West. You can see in that whole area, and it was, like, I don't know, about a hundred people.

Everybody's heads were all popping up now. Everybody is digging out, so I ran into a couple of firefighters and I said, "Well, you know, what the hell happened?" Some kind of an explosion, he goes, and that's what I thought it was, because it was like coming at you sideways, so we looked out, and we're getting the people out, and as we are getting people out through this debris onto West Street, I'm looking at the medical treatment area, and all the fire apparatus, and all the ambulances were on fire, and nobody is around. You know, where is everybody?

So I got back out into the street and got everybody out, and we directed them. They wanted to



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know where to go. We said just go to the water. Just go to the -- get on the boat, get the hell out of the city. And as I crossed West Street, I'm looking north, and I'm looking south, and nobody is around. Nobody is around, and I walked over to where the ambulances were burning, and one by one all of a sudden people started to appear. You know, the Metro Care personnel, other EMS personnel.

After about a few minutes, Bobby Browne's aid, Jay Katz, he shows up, and then Bobby shows up, so I said, "Let's get all the -- move the equipment out of the back of the ambulances that are in bags before they burn up and the oxygen and let's re-establish over by this building."

This building turns out to be the World Financial Center directly across the street from Liberty, you know, on the corner of Liberty and West so we got -- there is like a knoll there, a grassy knoll, whatever, concrete knoll. Vehicles have flipped over, on fire, and we get a lot of stuff, and we put it right in front of this building, and now we were going to figure out -- we'll move down towards the water or move north to West Street, and we were trying to figure out where we should go. The radios weren't working, and we

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hear this noise again.

This is 15, 20 minutes later. I don't know the exact time frame, and we hear this noise again, and I turned, and I could see Bobby Browne and Jason Katz. They were like about 20, 30 feet ahead of me, and they disappeared into the world -- they ran into the World Financial Center, so we start running, and we get to within, I don't know, five feet of it, and we get blown through the plate glass window with the wind velocity, so then we get trapped up in here, and we get buried again, and I'm on, I guess, like the left side of where -- I got pushed in and slipped to the left, and you got pushed into, you know -- got crashed into a wall, so when -- then that noise went on like a minute, minute and a half, and then it stopped, and we got buried again, but now there is somebody under me, and it's a fireman, there's a Scott pack, and we're wiggling around, and this turns out to be Lieutenant Stan Rybak of Haz-Mat operations, and we started buddy breathing with the Scott pack. I was able to get some air.

So we started moving around, and moving around, and then we ran into Firefighter Jeff Borkowski of Haz-Mat operations, and then we ran in to

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firefighter Phil McArdle of Haz-Mat Company No. 1, and the four of us just moved around the room trying to find a way out, and we couldn't find our way out, but we knew we were in the lobby floor, at least we thought we were.

After -- I don't know seemed like forever, but all of a sudden I could hear Phil McArdle yelling, "Over here, over here," and we crawled over, and we end up in this -- back here somewhere around here, and we come outside, and it's like a morning fog, a morning heavy fog. There's light, but you can't see very far, and I couldn't breathe very well at that point.

I was wheezing a lot, and everybody else was too, and our eyes -- we couldn't see. Our eyes were on fire with this debris, so we were able to see a deli across the way, so we run into this deli, and the window had been broken out, and we go up to the refrigerator, and we started just powering shit, you know, soda, club soda, whatever we could find, just trying to clear our eyes, and they leave.

For whatever reason, they left, and I'm there by myself, and I hear this voice behind me, "Buddy, can you please help me?" So I turned around. There is a guy on the floor, you know, covered in this dust, and

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he's got an angulated tib fib fracture, so I said, "Yeah, sure, brother, I'll help you out," and I threw him some water. I said, "Take some of this, start washing your eyes out."

So he goes, "Are you CHARLIE WELLS?" I turned around, I said, "Yeah, I am." I'm looking. It turns out to be a friend of mine, Dave Hanchu, who's a Daily News photographer. I'm sure you guys have seen him over the years, and I go, "Dave Hanchu?" He says, "Yeah, Charlie." I said, I go, "Your leg's broken," and he goes, "I can't get up." I said, "Okay, fine, I'll get you out of here, but we will be moving fast. I don't know what the hell happened."

Still, I don't know what's happening. So he starts moving with me, and he says to me -- he goes, "You know that one of the towers has collapsed." So I go, "No, no I wasn't aware of that." He says, "Because I took a picture of it as it was happening. That's how I got caught up and then got blown around."

So I go, "All right." So then I began to understand the enormity of what was going on, and I dragged him out of the deli and got him onto the side to the sidewalk, and now we went west, which was a right turn, and we go right to this North Cove Marina,

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and there between where I was dragging him and the North Cove Marina, another fireman and a police officer come up to me and said, "Can we help you?" And we picked him up, and we carried him to this Fire Department marine unit, and we get him out.

So then I walked back now toward North End Avenue, and now I'm trying to figure out -- no, I'm sorry. We -- I then leave the marina, and this esplanade is a walkway. I start walking down here and trying to, you know, re-establish where the personnel are. Nobody is around now, but people are walking this way. You know, civilians. I'm all telling them go down here, because word had it that there was a ferry over here, so I walked down here, and I ran into Commissioner Gregory, and a couple of seconds after that Jason Katz, a couple of seconds after that, half the crew of 18 Charlie, who was Joe Conzo -- Truoccolo ended up getting hurt. He got trapped up under a car, and he got numerous avulsions and lacerations, and they took him to the hospital, so now I know that they're alive, and then I ran into Bobby Browne, who I hadn't seen in about an hour, and he's alive, so -- but he was -- we were all banged up.

So I said, "You go down to the ferry and

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establish a triage point over there. If you need transport, we will see what we can get. I'm going to look around for ambulances and personnel and see what we can find." The radio wasn't working. The transmit button on the speaker mike was jammed.

So I turned the radio off, and you can clear it. Turn the radio on, and I tried to transmit, and I reversed direction and went the other way, and over here I ran into about 12 -- about 6 or 8 ambulances, about 10 personnel, and we were able to start to -- one of the things I learned about this is that the face shield of the helmet is absolutely useless. You need goggles. And we can't lock the ambulances any more.

In fact, once you got a confirmed MCI, you've got to leave them open, because they were running and locked, and the voluntary units, not only were they running and locked, when you broke into them, no, the ignition, somehow they were able to override, when you turn the ignition off, they can turn it. They can either take the key out and then lock the steering wheel, but the vehicle is still running, so you couldn't use the vehicles.

On all the department ones, we broke the driver's side window, the butterfly window, and then we

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could get in, and then we got about eight ambulances running and personnel, so we get over here, and over here there is like a little deli -- I'm sorry, it's a restaurant. We got into the restaurant, and when we got into the restaurant, you know, behind the bar, we were taking the bar spigot, you know, the soda spigot, and we were pouring the water and the club soda in our eyes to clear our eyes, and the phone is ringing.

Pick up the phone, "I can't talk right now," hang up, and then I picked up the phone again, and I tried to get through to citywide, and I couldn't get through to citywide, so I quick tried my house, and my wife picked up the phone, and I said, "You know, it's me. I'm all right, I'm okay, but it's going to be a long time before I get home, but I'm okay, love you," boom, I hang up the phone.

Come back out here, get up to West Street, and now there is a lot of personnel. Everybody is starting to come -- it's starting to all come together. Got back all the way over here to -- excuse me, over here to Vesey, and there is like a big parking lot over here, and all the cars were on fire, and I get back over here, and there is more EMS personnel, so I said all right.

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We started to set up a medical triage center over here now, Vesey and West, and then I was able to get on the radio at that point, and I got through to citywide saying that Car 631, Deputy Chief Wells reporting in, and with that they said go up to Broadway and 85 at the command post.

So now I had to walk -- I think I came down here, and I came down West through, you know, the gateway over here, and I came back up through here and took Albany Street, Thames, Trinity, and got up to Broadway, and I don't know what the intersection was, but it was 225 Broadway, a corner building, and there is a huge contingent of firefighters, about 15, 20 EMS personnel, and Dr. Kelly and Dr. Prezant, and they come up to me and they go, "Chief," he goes, "We are trying to set up" -- they wanted to set up a medical triage sector, treatment sector outside.

I said, "No, no, no. Let's go into this." There was a corner building, which is 225 Broadway, and inside there is huge hallways that had side elevator banks, and I said, "No, let's go in here."

The custodians of the building said, "Do you want us to bring desks down? You can use them as treatment tables." That's what they did, and then



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within about 15, 20 minutes, we had a well-established medical treatment center there with physicians from area hospitals, who they just showed up.

There was a drugstore nearby that was accessed, broken into, and we started bringing out all the wound care stuff, and within about 15 minutes started receiving patients, most of them respiratory, a lot of them eye injuries, and they had pulmonologists there, they had ophthalmologists there, they had emergency physicians there, Dr. Prezant, Dr. Kelly, and in fairly quick fashion we were able to get this thing ramped up and operating.

At that point, I was there for about an hour, you know, leading that, and what I could see, nobody wanted to be transported. They just wanted to be patched up to go back to work, so we had like four ambulances there, four department ambulances.

Lieutenant Kevin Haugh, Captain Jeff Race, Lieutenant Roy David, Lieutenant Steve Lincke, I believe Lieutenant Jack Sullivan, and there were a few others, all operating this area, quickly making sure that the patients are getting in, getting treated and getting moved back out.

After about an hour, I get a message from the

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command post from Chief Kowalczyk to report to the command post. Now they had established a command post back up here at West and Vesey, so Lieutenant David said, "I'll get you over there," because I couldn't see at that point now, very, very blurred vision, and I was having trouble breathing, and even with the eye treatments and them washing my eyes out, I couldn't see very well, and I wasn't breathing -- you know, just, you can hear yourself wheezing, but everybody was having this problem.

So we moved -- Roy gets me all the way over to -- at that point a couple of blocks away from the command post, and Dr. Al Cherson and somebody's driving him, and his car is -- all the windows are blown out, and, you know, like, five, six inches of dust. It was like, wild, and the things moving, and I just jumped on -- Roy and I just jumped on the trunk of the car, and we leaned in, and I said, "Could you just get us over to West and Vesey." That's where I'm going, Chief, no problem.

And we went over there and reported in, and at that point Chief McCracken was there, Chief Goldfarb, Chief Kowalczyk, Chief Basile, Chief Tramontana. There was a huge EMS contingent there with

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an operating medical sector, and immediately Chief McCracken, and Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Basile brought me over and, you know, said, you know, "You are going to the hospital." And I go, "No, I'm fine." They go, "Well, you are going to the hospital, but we want you to brief us on what you did," you know, so I gave them a briefing just as I described to you, and fairly, you know, quick order, and I got put on the M.E.R.V., and at that point I got more eye treatments and got brought over to St. Vincent's, spent about an hour and half at St. Vincent's, felt a lot better, and they released me, and I got dressed and hitched a ride back to the command post, and now that's 5:30, six o'clock in the evening, and at that point, I never re-entered any building, and I was never -- I was never above street level in any building.

Q. So basically after St. Vincent's you went back down there. Did you do any more ops?

A. No, they wouldn't let me do any more ops.

Q. Okay.

A. I just, you know, basically sat there and -- oh, what I did do operationally, was -- they were able to access and have response to that medical sector, the EMS operations post, the use of things like three, or

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four or five U.S.A.R. paramedics, and I started giving them a briefing on what I would expect them to do over the next few days, start ramping up, in the event they activated or accessed the U.S.A.R. equipment, that I wanted them to be with search teams, and I gave that report to, you know, Chief Tramontana, Chief McCracken, Chief Kowalczyk, who was standing there, and after about an hour of that briefing, that was basically the conclusion of my operational role at that site, so, you know, for a day, got a few people out, you know, was able to establish a couple of medical sectors, and miraculously, never had a fracture, you know.

That was it, and they said, you know, "Try and find your car," which I knew was on West Street, and they said you know, "You may not find it, you know, or severely damaged."

So I walked up, and there it is. Nothing is wrong with it, except it's covered in about six inches of, you know, soot, and that was it. I got into the car and somehow, you know, made my way home, and then I was out on medical for two days, which was Wednesday, the 12th, Thursday, the 13th, cleared back to work by the ophthalmologist and my primary physician on the 13th and then reported back to the site on the 14th.

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MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with Chief Wells. The time is 1146 hours. Thank you very much, sir.

Continuation with Chief Wells, for clarification.

THE WITNESS: The latter medical treatment on West Street with the- EMS operations command post where I reported back to after being released from St. Vincent's was located on Murray and West, on Murray and West, I believe, not Vesey and West.

It would have been too close into the site, because I was able to visualize the collapse of 7 World Trade Center as I was looking south on West Street, looking slightly east, and you could see the tower just disappear behind the other buildings, which would have been Barclay.

File No. 9110164

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT SEAN CUNNIFFE

Interview Date: October 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. DUN: Today's date is October 26th, 2001. The time now is 8:17 a.m. I'm Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department, City of New York. I'm working with Marissa Abbriano, also with the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

EMT CUNNIFFE: Sean Cunniffe, EMT specialist, Battalion 31.

MR. DUN: This is in regards to the date of September 11th.

Q. What do you recall?

A. It started off like any other day. I went in, got our truck ready, went to stop for breakfast on DeKalb and Flatbush, 99 cents bacon, egg and cheese, can't pass that up.

While we were ordering, we heard a lot of commotion on the radio. We turned up the radio a little bit louder to see what was going on. Heard what was going on, ran out to the truck, got in. 48 David put us on it, 48 David go.

We went. While going we were a little bit excited, it was going to be the job of the

century.

Q. When you got the call were you able to see the twin towers?

A. No, no, not from there. But en route as soon as we hit like Tillary Street, the Brooklyn Bridge is when we could see it. We could see the damage. It didn't look like much. We said -- we were thinking to ourselves, me and my partner, it's like, ah, some knucklehead with a private jet got too close or one of those little fighter planes.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Jarjeam Felton, 5148.

We were a little bit excited. We were like, this is gonna be the job of the century, the job of a career. We were going there, lights and sirens blasting along with I don't know how many other emergency vehicles over the same bridge as us. We went over the Brooklyn Bridge.

We got off the Brooklyn Bridge at Park Row, went up Church Street, I believe -- not Church Street, Chambers Street. We heard there was two staging points: One was on Church; the other was West Street. My partner said to go to



Church Street, and I said, "No, we always go to West Street." So we went to West Street.

We got there. I don't know the supervisor's name, but we pulled up in front of Six World Trade, West and Vesey, and we parked our truck pretty much under the pedestrian bridge and waited for further instructions.

We grabbed our equipment and got out and this and that. We were waiting there. That's when the scope of the whole incident unfolded before us, because as we were waiting there, we started seeing people falling from the building.

Q. When you were driving to Chambers Street, did you see debris flying around?

A. Yeah, yeah, not much but all that glass falling and papers and smoke.

Q. Was there a lot of people running, chaos?

A. I really didn't pay too much attention to it because I was too busy trying to get to the staging point at West Street. When we got there, when we got set up and we actually had a minute to actually stop and look and see, we were like,

oh, shoot.

Q. That was just the one tower that was hit at that point?

A. Yeah. The second plane hadn't come in yet.

We were lined up on West Street, west side, right by the pedestrian bridge, between six and one, over here somewhere. I don't remember the supervisor's name, but they had us line up, put our stretchers and equipment on it. We were just waiting for further instruction.

As we were waiting there, counting the people jumping, that's when we saw the scope of it. We counted 39 people. It was sad. That's when it stopped being exciting and reality kicked in and we were hanging out.

The second plane came in. It was the biggest noise I ever heard in my life.

Q. Did you see the plane?

A. Yeah. We saw it, we heard it, we felt the heat from it, the debris. We ducked under a truck, Fire Patrol 3, I believe it was, parked right over here. Just before -- because we started running. It was just before the

pedestrian bridge at West and Vesey. It was parked over here. Debris was falling and people were running and panicking.

We came out. A supervisor on the scene I believe said get all the vehicles around onto Vesey between North End and West in between here. So I went, got the vehicle, brought it around. My partner stayed there with the staging people.

Q. The officer, was he a male? Female?

A. Male, EMS lieutenant.

As we were standing there, we saw Von Essen, Judge, run by us. We saw the Mayor come out. Just a lot of people were there: 31 Victor, 31 Young and 31 Adam and 40 Charlie was there. A whole bunch of people from the neighborhood we know that work over here in Brooklyn.

I went, parked the vehicle over here. As I was returning, I had just turned this corner and everybody was running into American Express.

Q. American Express building?

A. American Express building. That was our next staging point, in the lobby there. We set up (inaudible). Everybody was bringing

stretchers, all the equipment in there, supervisor were in there. Everybody was waiting. That's when I got separated from my partner, because he went to try to find a phone to call his family.

We were waiting there. We really didn't know what was going on outside because we were inside. We couldn't really see from this point that far over. That's when everybody just started running. The rumbling started and a big cloud of smoke came by the windows and started breaking the windows.

Q. Now we're talking about the south tower collapsing?

A. Yeah, it collapsed. I'm sure it was some significant time in between. It seemed like ten minutes, the whole job.

Q. You lose time.

A. Yeah. I guess it's almost an hour later, 9:55.

From that, the building started collapsing. I just remember looking up at it and it was like, ah, that's not supposed to collapse. It's supposed to stay up. People were just

running, and someone kicked me and said, "Run, you stupid ass, run."

So we started running. We were running through the hallway, like the lobby is a big lobby, the hallway on the north side of the American Express building with the emergency exit, and we were packed in there like sardines trying to get away.

Stupid things you remember, like I remember telling people just run, get the hell out of the building. It's coming down right on top of us. The windows were already breaking in the front.

I remember seeing this woman. She was about maybe 5-5, close to 250. She was hobbling. I looked at her. She had a broken leg. I wound up grabbing her, putting her arm around me and just dragging her out of the building, because she was slowing too many people up.

As soon as we got I'd say in between these two -- the Merrill Lynch, that's when I decided to start going back, because I heard the maydays on the radios and all of our friends screaming. I heard 31 David screaming, 31 Mary

screaming, Chief Brown I believe was screaming on the radio.

I just stopped and tried to go back. I made it right back to the corner, and that's as far as I got. I couldn't see anything and couldn't do anything. So I decided to come back around here. The MERV truck was here. We were saying we'll stay with the MERV. We'll set up over here.

I don't know how long we were there, but we were trying to set up the MERV. We were getting vehicles pulled off this street.

Q. North End Avenue?

A. Yeah, because --

Q. Vesey?

A. Vesey. That's where they had us park.

31 Adam was dead. We were trying to boost it. It was like forget it, just leave it. This all happened approximately the same time of the collapse also. It was like forget it, just leave it.

There was a whole bunch of us standing over here by the MERV truck on North End Drive, River Terrace, I'm not sure. It was either here

or here. I'm not sure.

Q. This is still with the first collapse?

A. Yeah, still the first.

Q. Did you see the fireball come yet?

A. No, I didn't even look up. I just remember hearing like the helicopters. Everybody was just running wild, and I pretty much couldn't see.

We were setting up, and we said, okay, let's go back. We were on our way back, and we made it again to pretty much the same corner of West End and Vesey. I guess we were standing right in the middle of West Street when we heard over the radio that tower one is leaning, everybody evacuate, evacuate, evacuate.

We were just trying to get as many people out of there as possible just telling them to run. As soon as one started coming down, that's when we started running. I didn't stop until I got to the water.

Q. River's edge?

A. Yeah. I jumped over the wall and just kept going and kept going. I didn't know which way it was going to come. You don't know if it's

coming straight down, if it's going to tilt all the way down. There's too many things going on in your head at the same time.

I got to pretty much the water's edge and started running up this way.

Q. That would be north?

A. Yeah, started running north. The cloud came over. It wasn't too bad over here, the dust cloud. So we started -- we stayed pretty much between River, by the park between -- I think we made it as far as Murray maybe in between these two blocks here and the water.

That was pretty much it. We hung out there. There were a lot of police officers around. We saw a friend of ours from -- Officer Torres from the 76th Precinct. He was crying on the steps behind Stuyvesant. We stayed with him because he said he just lost his partner.

(Inaudible) and caught up in that. We consoled him a little bit.

We were trying to figure out what kind of instructions we were going to get. They started saying go to Chelsea Piers up on the west side. We stayed there for, I don't know, maybe a



half hour.

There was a pay phone there, and the line for the pay phone was like 12, 15 people long. So I said I've got to call my wife just to let her know I'm okay. I waited on the line. I met up with Felton again -- from the lobby, which is when I got separated from him. But as I was running, I saw him pass me by. At least I was relieved.

I had a lot of things going on. My sister works in two. I didn't know if she was still in there, if she got out.

Q. Did you ever make that phone call?

A. Yeah, yeah. I waited on that line, and I waited. As soon as I get up there, I asked somebody for a quarter, because I didn't even have a quarter. Trying to get a line, it took eight or nine times just to get a phone line and dial tone. Go figure, as soon as I dial the number and waste the quarter the line is busy, because she is calling here, probably. So it took me a while to get through, but I finally got through.

I asked her, "Did you hear from my

sister?" Her uncle works there also. She didn't know anything, and I didn't know anything. It was just "I'm okay and I'm going to come home."

At the time I was on the phone, Felton was in front of me on the phone. He made his phone call already. He started walking back. I kept yelling at him, "Don't go back there. Stay with me." Because he's only here a year.

It was kind of funny. I was nervous for him, because he wasn't even listening to me. I said, "Stay here with me. We'll go back together. I don't want to be separated from you again. I can't get a frigging line out on this phone." But he kept walking and walking. I was like, where the hell is this kid going?

So about 15, 20 minutes later, I finished my phone call and I start heading back towards Vesey, towards North End. I guess it was like up here. That's when I saw him with this big cloud of dust turn the corner, with his head sticking out of the vehicle saying, "I've got the vehicle. I saved the vehicle." It was like "Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a piece of crap. It dies on us twice a week. You should have let it

be buried. Maybe we'll get a new one."

We got in the vehicle. We started collecting -- there were a couple firefighters down there. We were helping them collect some equipment. There were a lot of firefighters that just dropped their packs. They were going around in a little golf cart. Some civilians had Scott packs and said, "Somebody left this." We were throwing them in the back.

We were heading back towards west side, and I guess we made it -- I don't even know where, to tell you the truth. We had to make a U-turn in an empty lot. I guess it was like Vesey and North End again to this corner, and we saw -- do you know Abdo?

Q. Yeah, Abdo.

A. What is he, a lieutenant?

Q. Yeah. He's a captain. He's a captain.

A. Is his last name Abdo or his first name?

Q. His first name. Captain Abdo Nahmod.

A. I know him from Lutheran, but I didn't really know what his rank was. I saw him a couple times over here on Myrtle. But Abdo was

there, and he was telling us to make a U-turn because there was a main, gas main, leaking or something. We just tried to circle, find a way. We circled back to the west side.

We picked up some people on the West Side Highway, and we went up to Chelsea. That's it. Chelsea, we stayed there for a while, just doing circles when the troops came in. We got a little bit bored and said, screw this, we're not wasting our time. There's people down there that need help and we're sitting here.

So we went back down and picked up an officer and a construction worker, went with them to staging, went back down, picked up more police officers and firefighters, brought them back up. We were doing transport between, say, Vesey and Chelsea, back and forth. We got somebody with an MI, a construction worker with an MI.

Q. Did you transport him to the hospital?

A. Yeah. There was a staging point somewhere on the west side. It wasn't as far down as Vesey.

Q. Canal.

A. No, it was below -- it was between the

tunnel and Vesey Street. There's a staging.

Q. Chambers.

A. Yeah. I don't know who the supervisor was. There was an EMS supervisor. Any vehicle pretty much that passed him he stopped and he commandeered everybody's equipment, like throw it here. He had a curb full of tech bags, oxygen bags, de-fibs, software. So he pretty much stripped the bus.

We had the patient with the MI. He gave me a paramedic; I forget his name too. He took my partner, Felton, off the vehicle. So Felton got off, me and the paramedic, we transported one to hospital 02.

From there there was a place to restock your vehicles. We dropped him off and restocked the vehicle as much as we could. We went back and got held up at the staging at Chelsea Piers again. That was pretty much -- from one staging point to the other. From there they said, "Okay, we need two vehicles to go down to South Street staging." So we go down there. "We don't need you here." We ended up going to the Greenwich area staging, the command post staging. We

pretty much stayed there the whole night with  
Chief Wells.

That was it.

Q. Thank you.

A. Time-wise.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview.

The time is 835 hours.

File No. 9110165

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ROBERT COOK

Interview Date: October 25, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

R. COOK

MR. DUN: Today's date is October 25, 2001. The time is 0848 hours. I am Richard Dun with the New York City Fire Department working with Marisa Abbriano, also with the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview with...

THE WITNESS: Robert Cook.

MR. DUN: Shield?

THE WITNESS: Shield 3719.

MR. DUN: Of Battalion 31.

Q. Robert, in your own words, just please describe the events leading up to and after September 11th.

A. Up to it? Well, we were getting fuel at Ladder 118 when people were coming up to the firehouse, it's right over on Midagh Street and Henry, telling us that a plane hit the World Trade Center. We took ourselves off the pumps, drew up to the corner. A bunch of firemen came out of the firehouse, went to the corner. You could see the first tower on fire. So then we were available, they assigned us to the call, they said to switch over to Citywide.

We proceeded over the bridge. Once we got over the bridge, the second plane hit. There was an explosion. We didn't know it was a second plane. We



R. COOK

thought it was just exploding from the first plane. Then over Citywide we heard people saying it was a second plane and it was deliberate.

We proceeded down west on Chambers Street, made a left on West Broadway. Coming down on West Broadway, we were flagged on the corner by a state correction officer. There we observed a female laying on the corner and several other patients standing around stating that they were injured. We had a private ambulance also there on the scene. They assisted us with long boarding this female and splinting her leg with a tib/fib fracture.

Q. At this point, what part were you there? Were you there for the first collision or the second collision?

A. The second collision.

Q. The second plane went into the building?

A. As we were on Chambers Street.

Q. But the buildings were still standing?

A. Still standing, yes. They were still standing. The whole time we were in Manhattan, they were still standing and you could feel the heat coming all the way over to there.

We proceeded to get about five patients into

R. COOK

the ambulance. We notified the supervisor that we had five patients. He said he'll check to see where we could transport the patients. He told us that he was ordered to have us, if they were not in extremis, to be transported out of the borough. So we proceeded to go to Long Island College with five patients.

On the way to Long Island College, going in to Long Island College is when the first building collapsed, and then the second building came down also while we were still there getting the patients out. We were tied up a little bit at Long Island College because we had police cars coming in and transit cars coming with patients, so we had to assist them to unblock us, get all the patients out.

Out of Long Island College, we got the stretcher back into the back of the truck and we were going to proceed back over the bridge. We had hit traffic all over the place in downtown Brooklyn trying to get back to the bridge. By the time we made it back to the Brooklyn Bridge, there was a chief there, an EMS chief, I don't know who she was, and I met up with Lieutenant Lugo and we were starting a triage post there. There was another unit, 32 Charlie, I believe, was also there. So we had about, I believe, four EMS

R. COOK

units and we commandeered about, I'd say, seven to eight private ambulances and we had a triage system going on there, and I was designated to be transport officer, which means that anybody coming in, anybody needs to be transported, I would tell which ambulance they would go in.

We were held there for about I'd say maybe two hours before they released us back to 911 and they left the private ambulances there. So then we proceeded back to the station, BBP'd the ambulance and went back out as a 911 unit.

Q. So both towers were still up the whole time that you were there? One tower went down --

A. When we were going to Long Island College. When we were at the College, the second plane came in.

Q. The second tower?

A. Yes. So that's basically it. We never made it in to the forward command post. Then we went back and we couldn't make it over the Brooklyn Bridge because of all the pedestrian traffic coming across, and that's when we all set up the triage there and we triaged patients. Then Victory Memorial had a big MERV set up there and also they said they had a triage system set up at the Marriott Hotel.

R. COOK

That's about it. That's all. I know it's nothing spectacular.

MR. DUN: Okay. Well, this will help because now we know some patients and things like that.

This concludes the interview with Robert Cook. The time is 0852 hours.

File No. 9110168

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

Interview Date: October 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. TAMBASCO: We are at Battalion 4 in the lounge, and the subject of the interview is Lieutenant Rosario Terranova, assigned to EMS Battalion 4.

The time is now 1330 hours.

BY MR. TAMBASCO:

Q. If you would be good enough to just tell us what happened.

A. Okay. Well, on the day of the events, I was actually still assigned to the Chief of Department's office, so my response to the incident actually was from headquarters, and I had been at work already. We were sitting -- I was sitting in my cubicle, and I heard Chief Ganci make a statement. You know, it was kind of like a screaming thing from his office. Said, "Come on, Danny. We gotta go right away. There's a plane that hit the Trade Center," and that, of course, was referring to Chief Nigro.

So at first, to be honest with you, in the office it was kind of -- people thought maybe he was full of shit, you know, he was kidding around, because he's like -- he was a jokster kind of guy, you know, but you could tell right away from the way he was moving around and people were starting to scurry that

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

something was happening.

So I ran to the window. From headquarters you actually can see lower Manhattan, and, sure enough, you could see in the one tower there was this huge, you know, black void and smoke coming up, so we realized there was a serious issue, but, you know, at the time to be honest with you, nobody thought what was going on. We thought it was just some kind of fluke accident and a plane had hit. People started scurrying for stuff, but I ran right away to get Chief Gombo, because even though I was assigned to the chief of the department's office, something like this I wanted to get him involved right away, so I informed him of what was going on, and I suggested that we go together to the incident.

So we gathered up our stuff, and everybody was rushing down the elevator banks. We got into our cars in the garage. Then we kind of went over in this, like, convoy, maybe four or five of us that followed. We were following Steve Mosiello, who was Chief Ganci's executive assistant, and Chief Ganci was in the car with him, Chief Nigro, Commissioner Feehan was in line with Commissioner Fitzpatrick, a couple of the other chiefs were there from upstairs. We all proceeded over

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

the Brooklyn Bridge. On the way over, we could see a lot of debris and stuff falling from the buildings. When we got down into lower Manhattan, we swung around City Hall Park, around Park Row, and then headed across to Church Street. From there we broke off a little bit.

Most of the convoy began to head down Vesey Street. Chief Gombo and I swung south on Church Street, and we wound up parking on Fulton Street, heading east about a hundred feet east of Church Street. The reason we chose to stop there is because there was a significant ambulance presence there.

We noted several voluntary hospitals there, and we saw some treatment going on the sidewalk. We decided that we would initially stop there and see what we could assess. We really didn't have any information. It was very early on in the incident.

We came to find out afterwards, in looking at the unit histories, that we actually were on scene within six minutes of the initial call to 911. There was no reporting place or command post that had been established yet, so we opted to stop there and at least get some kind of idea of what we were looking at. After we parked the car, we initially ran into a crew



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from New York Downtown Hospital. I don't know who they were, but they were beginning to treat patients on the sidewalk.

There was a couple of patients who were walking wounded, a few patients that couldn't ambulate. I remember clearly the sea of people coming out of this lobby, you know, and all we could do was encourage them to just to keep going, keep moving away from the incident site. You know, people were asking us, "What's happening? What's going on?" We really just didn't have any time. Just respectfully as we could, told them keep moving, keep moving north, just get away from the incident site.

We remember saying over the radio make sure everybody was their helmets on, this is a hard hat op, because we were starting to get hit with stuff. We didn't know what it was. It was mostly just soot and paper, but, you know, it wasn't really clear what was happening. About this time we heard like a little bit of an explosion. I guess it was secondary to the crash that had occurred, and we immediately told everybody let's retreat. We tried to take patients with us, but those who couldn't ambulate, we had no choice but to leave them there. We actually retreated across the

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

street back by the cemetery, which is right on the corner of Church and Fulton. It's part of St. Paul's Church there. We had some debris falling from the building, some larger objects and some objects with mass. Those patients that were unable to ambulate, they, unfortunately, became further victimized by the event. After that initially stopped, we made the decision to bring that treatment area back over to this side of the street, the east side of the street, and to have people as best they can use real extreme caution.

I remember running into two people from headquarters there, which was Lieutenant Medjuck and Captain Olszewski, who are both assigned to the EMS command, and Chief Gombo gave them direction to assume the responsibilities for that area, and he was going to assume command of the EMS operation. At my suggestion to him, we began to head west of the incident down Vesey Street.

We had gotten information that the fire command post was being established in the lobby of the No. 1 tower, so I expressed to him, and I thought because of the magnitude of the incident that's where he needed to be. That's where all the fire super people would be, the super chiefs would be, so that

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

would be the best position.

Anyway, we left Captain Olszewski at that location. We left our vehicle where we had initially parked it, and we began on foot to move forward, and we started accepting radio transmissions as command for the event.

We had established a staging area on the west side of West Street at Vesey Street being the cross. We instructed additional ambulances responding in that they should take that location as their staging location. We also ran into Captain Stone from Battalion 8 at that location, and Captain Stone was going to begin to coordinate those efforts. He wasn't necessarily assigned the role of staging, but it was his job to assume that an officer was placed in charge of that, and that began to come to fruition.

Chief Gombo and I began to proceed into the lobby of No. 1 tower, which is where fire had established a command position by the side command center. It was clear on the west side of the building that the damage, physical damage, to the building wasn't as extensive as it was on the east, but still we had a lot of debris, visible flames. We -- our path was, you know, was obstructed by some bodies that were

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

on the scene. I remember saying to Chief Gombo how horrific a scene this really was. You know, there was a couple of spots where we recognized by clothing that there were body parts, but we couldn't even recognize male or female. You know, it was just horrific.

So anyway, we decided to proceed into the lobby, which is where they had established the command post, and it was a very hazardous location to begin with. I mean, there was a lot of glass on the floor. A lot of the window panes from the lobby had been already broken. I can't tell you if they were broken intentionally by fire personnel for venting or if they were broken as a result of the incident, but we began to establish command there.

We saw many people there. We saw Father Judge there. We saw Commissioner Feehan there. We saw Chief Turi there. We saw -- who else? I'm trying to think who else was there. Anyway, if I come back to the names, I'll try to remember, but there was a significant number of people there. It was clear that that's where the initial command post was being established. We began to -- we began to speak and discuss about the long term, how we're going to attack this operation. I could see the mezzanine level -- I

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don't know if you are familiar with where that lobby was, but there was a mezzanine level above you, and then there was like a vestibule in there that you could go up a set of escalators to the plaza or into 6 World Trade Center. We could see at the mezzanine level there was a significant number of people being evacuated out into the plaza area from the mezzanine. I commented to Chief Gombo I thought it was so amazing how people were really moving, you know, very organized, very coordinated effort.

We remained at that location for a little while. Chief Basile came in, and he was there. They began to discuss strategies and what was going to occur. A couple of times really we were frightened by what we thought were additional explosions. We kept hearing these large boom, boom, and actually what it turned out to be -- what it said in the Times, it actually was people jumping and hitting on the glass awning that was outside the lobby there. We then decided that -- Chief Ganci had left, and he was actually establishing a fire command post across the street on West Street, south of Vesey Street. I would say the best landmark would be in front of the Winter Garden or, actually if you look at the Winter Garden

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

dome, it would just be almost just north of that spot. There was -- the best way to explain it is there was a driveway to a loading dock to that building, and it was established there at that location.

Q. Which I guess probably was the American Express Building.

A. That's what it is, right. There was a loading dock off of West Street for 3 World Financial Center, which is the American Express Building, and that is just north of the Winter Garden, and that's exactly where it was. This pedestrian bridge that existed on the map, if you look at it as reference, just north of that is where this driveway was. We could -- so that's where we decided to proceed, we would move to that location, and we did so.

We did so, I would say, probably about ten minutes after Chief Ganci had left to go there, and still at this point the second building, the second building had yet to be affected, and there was some question about this. There was a video that I was privy to see, which is being kept confidential in nature, held by the chief of safety, and it was taken by an amateur photographer who was doing some training with the first battalion. I don't know if you are

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aware of the tape, but anyway it's really helped me -- seeing that helped me get this frame of reference. I'm very sure of my times on this, you know.

So anyway, Chief Gombo and I decided to proceed out of the building. We left Chief Basile at the building to coordinate resources there. Now, we moved out of the building back across West Street. We kept on staging again to see what was occurring. We had a few people that were standing south of Vesey Street. We corrected that situation, moved everybody north again on Vesey Street where we wanted to stage, and, you know, our mentality about staging is always -- especially now, since we're working with the Fire Department, to get further away, because we know that they're coming with additional resources, and we don't want to lose any assets behind them.

So again we moved them, and then we proceeded to the command post. Now, at the command post, I remember seeing Chief Ganci there, Steve Mosiello, Chief Burns. I remember speaking with Commissioner Feehan. Commissioner Fitzpatrick was there, and it's funny, because Commissioner Feehan asked me, you know, what about the patient count, how many patients we got? I said to him, "Listen, Commissioner, with all

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

due respect, it's a lot." You know, and we kind of giggled. He said, "I know, I know, but I have to ask the question." It's kind of sad to me because it was almost in a jovial way. I mean, that was his personality. Anyway, we began to establish our situation now, and we heard a little -- all of a sudden we hear a huge explosion, you know, and in looking up, you could see the second tower being hit by this second plane, you know, and it was at that -- it was at that very moment that everybody there realized that we were -- you know, that this was clearly a planned act that this is --

Q. No accident?

A. This was no accident, you know, and it was a terrible feeling to say, oh, my God, you know, this is something that's really bad that's happening. You know, just on a personal note you started to think, I wish I could call somebody or do something, but there was no time for that kind of stuff. We had to put that away.

So we initially began discussing the need for resources, retreat of resources, where we could move people to, if we had to. What are going to be some of our evacuation plans? We started to discuss what



ROSARIO TERRANOVA

further acts we could anticipate. Is there something else that's going on in other places of the city? Should we anticipate additional problems down here in the financial center?

It seems like it happened very fast. I mean, the time went actually longer than that, when you're involved in it, I'm sure you understand that, you know, it seems like these things are happening, and there's no real time frame.

While we were discussing this, I remember hearing Chief Ganci say, "Oh, shit," you know, so we all looked up, and you could hear this rumble coming. We looked up at the south tower, which is the No. 2 tower, and all of a sudden we began to see like a pancake. I mean, it's as simple as that. If you could imagine you had two cards in your hand, and you just clapped your hands, and they just closed on each other. That's what it looked like, like a toy, and we began to see the pancake, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, one floor after another, as quick as you can imagine it.

At the time I was standing looking at the building in front of the fire command board. To my left was Chief Gombo and to my right was -- to my right

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front was Chief Ganci with his aide, Steve, and right directly to my left was Roger Moore, Lieutenant Roger Moore. Directly behind him to my right was Commissioner Feehan, so I remember Chief Ganci saying, "Go, go, go, go."

Everybody decided which way they were going to go. Some people went to the left. Some people went to the right. I decided -- I looked behind me, and I saw a few people were heading into this loading dock. The loading dock bay was actually open. I thought to myself, I don't think I could -- I don't think I can out run this, you know, and maybe I got a better chance getting into safety, so I said to Gombo, "Come on let's go."

I went about three steps, maybe three or four steps running, and I turned to see and he wasn't -- Gombo wasn't there. He was still kind of standing, looking at the building, so I ran back to him. I kind of grabbed him by the neck like a -- you know, the best way I can describe it is like a kitty cat. I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, and I pulled him with me into this building.

When we got inside the bay, we could hear it getting louder. You know, it's getting loud, and it

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was getting dark, so I had to him -- you know, I said to myself, maybe we should -- you know, it's an odd thing, because even though you certainly were running for your safety, there is an odd curiosity, and you want to see it. You want to see what's happening, so everybody was run to go what they thought was safe, but still not getting as far away from the door as they probably should have. I said to myself, you know what, this is not how I want to check out, so I said let's go , and I grabbed Gombo. I was going to run down further into the bay, and then -- I don't know. It's very strange, but in the loading dock, right against the wall very close to the door was a white van, and it was just parked there, and I said, "All right. We are going to grab refuge behind this van."

We went to the back of the van, and we got down on the ground, and we heard this huge, thunderous, loud sound, and then it was completely dark and completely silent. It was like the sound of death. It was so strange, because there was all this commotion, and people screaming, run, run, run, go, go, go, and then I guess at the point -- at that point the debris hit the bay, and it was just complete silence, an eerie silence. I'd be amazed that people who were in that

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garage don't describe it the same exact way, that eerie silence. I took a second and realized -- I mean it was dark. We had a few lights down at the end of the garage, the end of the loading bay, but it was very dark.

I took a second to realize, okay, I'm not trapped. I can move everything. I had Gombo. I wouldn't let him go. I could feel his shirt. Then I went to take a breath, and all I got was dirt. It was at that point I said to myself, did you make a bad decision not running? Because now, you know, maybe you didn't get buried in this crap, but are you going to be able to breathe? Are you going to suffocate here?

But anyway, the long and the short of it is we took a second, and within a minute or so the dust started to settle a little bit. You could breathe through your clothes. People began to scream. I remember Jerry saying, "Ross," and I said, "Jerry." We had each other. He had a little flashlight. He had the flash on, and we were trying to see did we see anybody else. Then I thought to myself -- I thought of the thing about the '93 incident when they had this Ryder truck full of explosive, and now I realized how strange it was that this white van was parked in this

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

loading dock. I started to think to myself, God, did we step into the wrong place here? So I said to Gombo, "Look, we gotta get out of here, because we don't know --" I didn't know the integrity of the building we were in, what fell on us, how much we're under, so we tried to go back and look, but it was too dusty. I couldn't see anything.

There was a couple of firefighters in the building, so we proceeded to the back. Everybody proceeded first to the back of the garage. We saw Terry Wynter there, who was from OEM. He was in the garage with us. I saw a couple of cops and, you know, Jerry started asking me "Where's Feehan? Where is Ganci?" We didn't see them, so we believed, him and I believed, that they were buried as a result of that. Then he said, "Where's Roger?" He thought Roger was behind us, and we couldn't find Roger either. So we just assumed that these guys had been buried.

Now, it was strange, because -- I'll get right back to where I am, but we didn't realize -- we didn't find out until Friday of that week that that's not where Ganci and Feehan perished. That was mostly because we spent so much time working at the scene the next three days, we didn't have any time to talk to

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

anybody else and find out what really occurred. Anyway, they were able to evacuate by running. Then we also found out that -- we also found out from Roger that, in fact, he had injured his leg, actually both his legs, but he actually was in that garage. He actually made it in that garage. We felt -- or I can speak for myself -- Chief Gombo may say otherwise -- but I felt profoundly upset because, you know, it was afterwards that I found this out.

I thought, man, I abandoned him, you know. I should have gone back to him and looked for him, but, like we said, we didn't have SCBAs. It was very -- breathing was very poor in there, and we asked some firefighters to go back and see if anybody had survived that had been buried or trapped. It turned out that those firefighters are the guys who helped carry him out of that garage.

Q. Right.

A. Yes, so Roger, that's correct, so in a sense, I guess -- while I may feel personally bad for not doing it myself, I guess in a sense we sent somebody to help him, so there is some resolve there.

I'm sorry. I know I'm a little long winded, but I hope it will help you.

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

Q. Not at all.

A. We -- so we were in this little garage office, which I guess was intended for the attendant. There was a telephone there we were trying to get out on. We couldn't get an outside line. As a matter of fact, somebody called in looking for somebody, and Chief Gombo said to them, "Look, you know, he's not here, but if you can call somebody, tell them that there are people in this place, and we don't know if we have a way out."

Anyway, one of the firefighters that was in there decided that they would take the stairway to see if there was an access point above us. While he did that, we waited. We sealed the doors and put some towels down to try to lessen the smoke situation and the dust situation in the room we were in.

I would say maybe about five, ten minutes went by, and the firefighter came back to us and said, "Look, I found an access." We have to take a stairway about maybe two floors up, and then we needed to walk towards the back of the building, and then there was a door that emptied into the courtyard of the back of the building, 3 Financial on the west side of the building or directly against -- directly north of Battery Park

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

by the water line.

Q. Right.

A. We were able to evacuate the building in that fashion. We got out of the building. There was debris and dust everywhere. If you need an explanation, the best way to try to describe it is take a vacuum bag that you should have changed two weeks ago.

Q. Right.

A. Then open it and just throw it up in the air. That's what it looked like, the dust and shit flying everywhere. So we said okay -- now that we're out, let's try to get on the radio and make some communication. We were able to get on the radio, let them know that we were all right, and try to get a status for the operation.

It was difficult to -- it was a difficult situation to try to get back in charge of, because we were out of commission for probably about 30 minutes.

Q. Right.

A. In our absence, things had already been going in place, so it seemed senseless to take that role back over. What we opted to do is we opted to try to move back towards the incident site and see who we could get ahold of.



ROSARIO TERRANOVA

Q. Right.

A. So we began to -- let me find my bearings here. We began to move -- yes, we began here on North End Avenue.

Q. Right.

A. We began to head up North End Avenue and then to Vesey.

Q. And then east across Vesey?

A. Then we tried to go east across Vesey. Now, what wound up happening was we encountered a lot of ambulance crews that were operating between 3 and 4 Financial Center, on Vesey Street, which is between West and North End Avenue.

On North End Avenue, north of Vesey Street, there's a hotel there. What we started to do is we established a treatment area in the lobby of this hotel. I'm sorry. The name escapes me, but we began to establish a treatment area in the lobby of this hotel off of North End Avenue. Like I said, there were crews operating here on Vesey Street, and there was some crews operating south of Vesey on North End Avenue, as well.

We actually met up with Chief Basile there. We met up with Chief Pascal there. Chief Gombo

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actually called a meeting with the chief officers there because we were unable to make any contact with Chief McCracken. We were -- we knew he was there, but we were unable to contact him. We weren't sure if he had perished in the incident. There was, of course, rumors flying all over the place, this one is dead, that one is dead, so we did our best to figure things out.

Chief Goldfarb was there with us. Chief Villani was there. What we decided to do is we decided that we would continue to maintain this treatment area. I suggested to Chief Gombo that there's going to have to be a spot where the agencies are going to start to get together, and the only logical place we could think of, given the proximity at the time of OEM to the incident, we didn't think that they would be at their offices in 7 World Trade Center. We decided that we needed to make our way to One Police Plaza, which is all the way on the east side of Manhattan. We thought that -- Chief Gombo and I said we're going to proceed over to that location. That was our initial plan, and right around this time again we had some commotion. We stopped our meeting, and we went out again where we were treating patients, and we were out on the street when we heard the rumble of the second tower

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

collapsing. I remember specifically myself going up Vesey Street again towards --

Q. Eastbound?

A. Yes, heading eastbound up Vesey Street to try to wave people down. Come on, come on, let's go, let's go. There was one guy, he didn't want to leave his patient. I said, "Come on, you have to leave her. You gotta evacuate that location."

I remember seeing the rubble, seeing the rubble fall and actually start to chase down the street, and, you know, it's strange because you wouldn't expect -- you wouldn't expect debris to do that, but it literally traveled, like, you would see these movies with like a tidal wave that flows through the streets and hits down any path it can. It literally traveled that way. I began to retreat myself, begging people to come with me back onto North End Avenue. Then I took a position against the building on North End Avenue just north of Vesey Street.

Q. With the building between you and the --

A. Right, like, I put myself up against the building. I was -- I stayed as close to the edge as I possibly could, because I wanted to try to be able to

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

grab people or just pull them off to the side, because I was afraid people would keep running straight and put themselves still in the middle of the road.

There was some people on the south of Vesey Street that refused to come over. They were fine where they were. Then, just like I described, there is this huge puff of dust to my left through Vesey Street, and then to my right through Murray Street. The percussion of it was so much it actually pulled me off the building, you know, so I can't -- there were a couple of people who I remember seeing on Vesey Street who I couldn't find again.

Q. Right.

A. Oh, I want to mention this. I forgot to mention this. Going back to the command post.

Q. Right, the original command post?

A. Original command post in front -- on West Street. One of the people who I had lost sight of was Sam Harris. He's an EMT. He's Chief Digg's aide. He happened to have been there with Captain Pincus that day. He was working with us to start some communication, and he broke off from us to head up into the Winter Garden building to try to make some communications. It was at that point when that

ROSARIO TERRANOVA

building collapsed.

Now, I bring it up only because I met up again with Sam Harris and accounted for him back at the hotel at North End Avenue.

Q. Right.

A. So we -- he at least was accounted for.

One of the people we couldn't account for at that time was Chief Basile's aide. His name escapes me, but I know we were looking for him. We couldn't account for him. He was later accounted for, thank goodness.

Anyway, after the second building collapsed, here we were again consumed with this debris shield, this dust shield, you know. There was some people who had taken refuge underneath ambulances. But anyway, we started to recoup things a little bit, and I said, okay, now we really have to think about what we're doing. So we were back in the lobby, and actually stepped away from the windows. Everybody started to get very paranoid of what was going to happen next. We were establishing our plans for the operation, who was going to be responsible for what sectors, and all of a sudden I noted -- I saw a lot of cops running north past the building. Even some firefighters, and I was

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too curious, saying, "What are these guys running from?" So I went outside I said, "What's the story?" They told us that as a result of the collapse, the building that we were in had had a gas leak breach on the opposite side of the building. So I went back in, and I said to Chief Gombo, "Look, I think we need to -- have to just abandon our operation here and move everybody north as far north as we can and get a handle on this," because we need to make sure all our people are safe. Of course he was very frustrated at the time, too, and he said to me, "How far north do you think we should go?" I remember specifically telling him I think we should walk north until you don't see any stuff any more. Just keep going north.

So anyway we decided -- we started proceeding north on North End Avenue with a convoy of personnel. It was about Murray Street that we actually encountered Chief Callan, fire Chief Callan. He was --- I don't mean any disrespect to him, but he was completely dazed and out of it. He was just in total shock from the event, just walking in circles, you know. I grabbed him, I said, "Chief Callan, are you all right? Are you okay." He just said to me, "Hi, how you doing?" I said "Chief, come on. Why don't you walk with us. We

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have to start walking forward. Why don't you get all your people to come with us. We have to move north."

That kind of snapped him a little bit out of it, and he started to give the order to his people, let's move north, let's move north, so we did. We moved, I would say, a couple of blocks. I can't tell you exactly where we stopped. Probably somewhere around Warren Street. We began to -- there was a police officer from the Police Department chief of department's office, who actually had a gator out. They must have had them at headquarters and used them to transport people over. We explained to them what we were doing, and he said, "Come on, chief, I'll take you over," so we went, Chief Gombo and I, Chief Goldfarb and his aide. We went to One Police Plaza.

When we got there, we went upstairs to the command center. The command center had already been completely activated. I mean, there was a flurry of activity going on, and it was there for the first time that we began to see some images on the television of what had occurred. I remember saying to Chief Gombo what a good decision it was to come there, because it was -- we now had the landline capability. We were able to call headquarters. We were able to establish

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some interagency communications. We still didn't have a fire rep with us, but anyway we decided this would be a good spot. We made contact with headquarters. We made contact with fire operations to say that this is where we are, and we think it would be an excellent idea to have a fire rep there.

The choice to bring Chief Goldfarb with us was a superb choice, because he had a vast knowledge of mutual aid and interagency communications. He was able to start establishing contact with FEMA and with state EMS and begin to put plans in place immediately for mutual aid.

He also had a very intricate knowledge of the Oklahoma City bombing. So he was very influential on telling us this is what we should anticipate in 24 hours. This is what we can anticipate in 48 hours. I tell you, I got to give him a lot of credit. He was a hundred percent on the money, because, sure enough, he was right. I mean, the amount of supplies that came in. Just for example, as an insight, one of the first things he said to us that we had to consider doing is find warehouse space.

At least, we both looked at him, like, how could you think about that now, and he said, "Trust



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me. You are going to want to think about that because in two days you are not going to be able to move." He was a hundred percent correct. I mean, this battalion here, Battalion 4, simply by nature of its proximity and the logistics of the station became an absolute warehouse. It wasn't till last week that we just got rid of almost 200 cases of food and clothing that we sent to shelters because we had no need for it. We were completely overwhelmed by generosity.

So anyway, we spent a large portion of the rest of the day, I would say realistically we were there. We got there around one o'clock, and we spent the day there until about ten o'clock. About ten o'clock we decided that we would --we wanted to head back over and see what was happening. Captain Connelly, who was on duty, he just came on duty. He was sent to the trade center, to the command post at One Police Plaza to take over for EMS liaison. We decided we would rotate. We built a schedule for continuous manpower there for staffing. Chief Gombo and I, along with Chief Goldfarb and his aide, decided to head over. We decided we'd walk over on foot, and we were able to do that.

First thing we did was we wanted to go and

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see what kind of condition, if at all, Chief Gombo's car was in. Because that was our mode of transportation. As it turned out, amazingly, because of the way the building fell, his car was not hit by debris, although the driver's window had been broken. Of course, the car was filthy and dusty inside, but other than the driver's window, we started the car, and it was fine. Interestingly enough, there were a lot of other cars with the windows broken like that. We thought it odd that just one window would have been broken, and we surmised later on from speaking to people that actually it was not broken as a result of the incidents. It was broken by people after the buildings fell to try to get in and get some fresh air, which I suppose it's a small price to pay for a window.

Anyway, once we realized the car was all right, we left it there. We were able to get it out. We had to come over some hose lines and stuff, but there was a path to get through. It was filthy in the streets. There was inches and inches of dust and muck. By the time we had gotten there, of course both the buildings had fallen. This one building -- I'm trying to describe exactly which one it was. I guess

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it was 5 World Trade Center had kind of been gutted out just like a picture out of a movie. You wouldn't even believe it.

So we started to proceed north on Church because, of course, you know, the command center -- by the time we were done with this, the EMS command post had been established at Chambers Street and West Street. That's actually across from Stuyvesant High School. Ironically, that's where we remained for several weeks after the incident, as far as the command post was concerned. We began to walk up Church Street in an attempt to make our way over to West Street. We were going to go down Vesey Street, but it was completely blocked by debris.

Then we decided we'd stay north of Chambers Street. We ran into a couple of different people we knew. I ran into this guy, we call him Yack. His name is Jimmy Yakamovich. He's a fire captain. He was a good friend of Chief Ganci's. Everybody knows Yack. Most people know him by now.

Anyway, we ran into him, and he was there. He was there in some somebody else's bunker gear and helmet, and he was telling me -- we were talking about -- he goes, you know -- you know, Ganci is dead

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and Feehan is dead. They can't find Burns or Barbara, or -- you know, the list just went on and on, Fanning. It was hard to believe. I mean, Fanning, and Downey. I mean, these guys who had all but made the department in the last 40 years, all of them gone in one shot. I mean, people began to think about how we going to move on from here, you know. We were glad to hear at the time we knew Nigro was okay, Cassano was okay. I knew Callan was okay, because I saw him myself, although physically okay at least. So we -- you know, we wished him well. We made our way over to Chambers and West Street. That's where we ran into -- Chief McCracken actually was there. He looked beat up, but he was in good shape. He was in complete command, as always, of what was going on with EMS. He had established a very good plan about how we were going to do things. He began to say to Chief Gombo, at least for the next few days we need to -- him and I need to -- him and I meaning Chief Gombo and Chief McCracken need to be on this rotating schedule. One of them always needs to be there. So we decided that we would -- Chief Gombo and I would head home.

It took us about midnight by this decision. We would head home and then come back in the morning to

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relieve him. Chief McCracken would stay own, and then we would go on, like, this twelve-hour thing for the next few days. So we did. We made our way back to the car, and we headed home. That particular night I stayed by Chief Gombo. We went home for a couple of hours, and we headed back in on the 12th.

So that's my recollection of September 11. I mean, I have some other stuff that we did subsequent to that, but, I mean, it doesn't --

Q. No, that's pretty much -- other than anything else you may just want to add. I mean, you know, feeling wise or anything like that, that you'd like to have added into this, that's -- I can't ask for much more detail than you have given me.

A. Well, I tried my best to lay it out, because, I mean, it's helpful for me to talk about it. I mean, it was difficult -- it was a difficult week, you know,. I mean, a lot of stuff went on to establish things there. You know, in the subsequent days, we worked with Jersey City Medical Center, who had lent us a command post to use.

Q. Right.

A. Something that should be on the record, should be that EMS needs to have a command post so we

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can operate the long-term operation. I mean, we used to have the field com, however inappropriate that vehicle might have been, but we still had it. The truth be known, fire communications has vehicles, but they are fine for fire communications. When we need to set up something like this, we need to go outside and say could you help us, because we don't have -- and that's a kind of silly situation. But that's a personal feeling, not a professional one. We took the time to go to the ME's office and see their operation there. I have to tell you, it's horrific.

They were doing -- I mean literally doing autopsies right on the street underneath tents. I give a lot of credit to the guys who worked sectors in the next coming days. One of the hardest sectors to establish was the morgue sector. It was hard because there were a lot of -- tensions were running high, let's just put it that way.

I mean, we had some run-ins -- when I say we, I mean Chief Gombo and I. We basically were married at the hip for the remainder of the week, you know. We had some run-ins with Chief Butler and Chief Cruthers, which were later ironed out. Of course, they were just nothing more than people being so profoundly saddened

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by what had occurred. It was important to us, and, of course, it was important to fire suppression, as well. We needed to establish a very clear, well-maintained morgue sector. So that one, of course, we could account for all our lost, both PD, fire and EMS, but mostly so that we could ensure that the remains of the Fire Department personnel would be returned as quickly as possible to their families. That was something that was difficult to do, but I'm proud the way that worked out.

And, you know, we went on. I mean, things have somewhat come down to normal at this point, or at least started to establish a long-term basis, you know. We -- right after the event, we established 24-hour coverage of headquarters and a staffing person at OEM a staffing person at police headquarters, and, you know, staffing people at the command center. For the first week or so everybody -- you couldn't pull people away if you tried. Everybody wanted to be there. They couldn't do enough, but it had to come to a point where you had a decision to make that this is going to be a long-term operation. This stuff is not going to go away tomorrow. The debris is just not going to clear. We are going to have to be into this

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for six months or a year and still you need to establish a long-term plan because you can't run out of people in six weeks, and that's where we were headed.

So to our credit -- I mean, I think that things are proceeding okay now. I mean, I think it's good that people are volunteering to do overtime down there, and that the 911 system is back in place the way it was, although, in my opinion, of course, I don't know how much -- how long you could ask people to do overtime in that kind of scenario. I think it's a very difficult thing to do.

I mean, I have my ideas about how we could do it also, but we will leave it at that. I'm glad to -- in a sense, I'm glad to have survived it and be able to contribute to this collection of information. I think it's important to document historically what's happened in the department.

You know, from my perspective, I've encouraged everybody I know to speak to you about this, to speak to investigators about this. You know, there's an unfortunate stigmatism that comes with your office and your organization and, you know, what are they looking for? Are they looking to fire people because they put in for comp. packages and they



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weren't there.

I mean, of course, you know, to be honest with you, if people are performing inappropriately, they need to be discussed with it, but I -- so they don't expect that that's the meat and potatoes of this investigation. I don't -- I didn't approach it that way. I hope my information has been informative to you.

Q. It certainly has been, and just keep in mind that -- actually think about it 30 or 50 years from now when somebody wants to look back and this and get more of the personal stories.

A. You know, I tell you why I think it's a good idea, I'm offering these things up, because maybe it will come up for further discussion.

One of the things we used to at EMS prior to the merger, we used to do post incident summary reports. This was something that Chief Cross was a stickler for when he was the chief of operations for EMS. Any time we had a big incident -- I mean a big -- certainly not relative to this, a big, you know, a plane crash, a building clamps, along those lines, we always take the time to do a post incident critique. What we would do is we would print the CAD and gather

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all the ACRs and create a time line and a table of organization and speak to those in charge and have narratives written, and this information would be put in chronological order and stored on paper so that we can learn from the lessons we had. I think back on the World Trade Center event, which is an event that we did not do a post-incident summary about, largely because of the magnitude.

Q. Right.

A. But I think back on that event, working in operations as I did, and working with the chief of department's office as the correspondence liaison, I received on many occasions inquiries from people who wanted to learn from our department. It was a standard joke when anybody would call about the '93 bombing they would be switched immediately to Chief Seretta, because Chief Seretta was one of the command officers. Then when Chief Seretta retired, they switched this person immediately to Chief Burns because Chief Burns was also one of the ranking fire chiefs -- but unfortunately there are no more rank and file chiefs that were in '93. All their information, and history and expertise has been lost. That's a real shame, so I hope that -- I hope that this will pave the way for other future

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considerations for reports like that when we have these types of -- it's important history, and you're doing an important thing here.

That's all I have.

Q. That's about it, Ross. I thank for you the info. It certainly was quite detailed.

A. I hope it's been helpful to you. Thanks a lot, Michael.

MR. TAMBASCO: We conclude as 1415 hours on October 26.

File No. 9110170

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT CURTIS JACKSON

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

C. JACKSON

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 30th, 2001.  
I'm Ron Castorina from the New York City Fire  
Department conducting an interview at Battalion 31 with  
EMT Curtis Jackson. With me is...

MR. DUN: Richard Dun, Fire Department.

Q. Sir, can you tell me your name, your rank,  
your title and your assignment?

A. Curtis Jackson, EMT.

Q. EMT at battalion--

A. Battalion 31.

Q. Can you tell me, on September 11th, 2001, on  
that particular day, the events that took place?

A. Sure. We came out of Brooklyn Hospital, me  
and my partner that I was working with that day, and as  
we went 98 --

Q. Who was your partner?

A. Decosta Wright.

Q. Okay.

A. We hit the 98 button and got in our vehicle,  
tried to head to our 89, and we heard the dispatcher  
sending numerous units over to Citywide. So we wanted  
to find out what was going on, so we switched one of  
our radios over to Citywide and we found out the World  
Trade Center was on fire. So we started to head over

C. JACKSON

into that direction towards the bridge and we asked the dispatcher to give us that assignment.

MR. CASTORINA: Excuse me. This interview is conducted at 0615 hours.

Q. Go ahead.

A. As we requested to be placed on that assignment, the dispatcher gave us the assignment, we went 63 to the World Trade Center. We shot right over the bridge in about five or seven minutes and we pulled up in front of One World Trade Center behind numerous emergency vehicles, fire trucks and EMS vehicles that were already there. At that time we were just told --

Q. At this point what had happened; the first plane had hit?

A. I'm sorry. The first plane had hit already.

Q. That was the start; when you got there, the first plane had hit?

A. The first plane hit.

Q. The tower was on fire?

A. Right. The tower was on fire. At that time, as we were there, we were told to set up triage right in the area where we pulled up at. During that time I saw numerous people just coming out of -- dropping out of the sky, I mean, actually jumping to their death,

C. JACKSON

landing all over the place, crashing through glass, crashing right on vehicles, on the street. We were just told to set up triage and wait for patients to be brought to us, but nobody brought us patients because there was nobody to bring out.

I tried to use my cell phone, but I couldn't get any transmission. So myself, Decosta Wright and EMT Felton started to head over to the building across the street from where the towers were on fire. As we were heading over there, that's when I heard a big explosion. I didn't know what it was. We turned around and saw the second tower on fire and we started running inside the building and we just ran. It was like a maze. We didn't know where we were going.

As we were running around in there, Decosta and I had scaled a fence inside there because everything was closed off inside, and as I scaled that fence, I turned around to see where Felton was. I couldn't find out where he was. So I turned back and ran back to see where he was at to make sure he was all right, and after that, I grabbed him, we all found an exit out of there. We went through some stairways out to the rear of the building.

Q. Which building were you in, do you remember?

C. JACKSON

A. I'm not even sure.

Q. It was across the street?

A. It was across the street. We ran out through the other side, and as we exited that building, we were told to move our emergency vehicles from the front of the World Trade Center around the corner.

Q. Who told you this?

A. It must have been the Deputy Commissioner or something.

Q. Was this on the radio or --

A. No, this was in person, physically.

Q. Okay.

A. So as we were moving the vehicles around the corner, like I said, I still kept seeing bodies jumping out of the windows and landing all over the place and glass and everything was flying all over the place, and we moved our vehicles around the corner and at that point we were told to move our vehicles further around the corner. I don't know what street that was. As we were moving our vehicles, my vehicle wouldn't start, it was down, mechanical, because the lights were on but the engine was shut off, and at that time all our keys were collected, so I wasn't able to move the vehicle.

Q. Who had your keys, do you remember?



C. JACKSON

A. Somebody with a white shirt took everybody's keys.

Q. Staging officer, I guess.

MR. DUN: Was this still before the second plane hit?

EMT JACKSON: No. This was after the second plane hit. The second plane must have hit when I heard the explosion when we were running in the building. We started moving our vehicles again and everybody else moved their vehicle. I tried to get a jump from another unit to move my vehicle. At that time the tower came down, was coming down, and at that point I just started running and everybody was ahead of me and I just started running, following them. When I looked back, you see the big -- a cloud of like dust and buildings. It was like it was a giant mutation of something just chasing me. Everybody ran towards the water. I ran towards the water. Half the people ran downtown and half the people ran uptown, as you hit the water side. So I ran uptown and everybody else ran downtown -- no. Half ran uptown, half ran downtown, and I was just following the crowd.

Q. You ran uptown?

A. Yes. I was just following the crowd.

C. JACKSON

Everybody --

Q. Did that dust catch up with you?

A. No, the dust never caught up with us. I saw people getting caught up from behind me who were slow, who were running slow or just didn't make it. After that point, we waited for the dust to clear, and then I went back to try to see if I could help anybody who needed help, and at that point I was met with another white shirt, an individual from the Fire Department EMS command, and I was told to join another group to set up triage downtown by -- there were two staging areas.

MR. DUN: South Ferry?

EMT JACKSON: South Ferry.

A. There was one uptown at Chelsea and there was one at South Ferry. I was told to join the group down at South Ferry. At that point the second tower came down, so we started running again, and this time I ran downtown and not uptown. But this time I was further away from where the collapse happened.

Q. When it started coming down?

A. Yes. And the same thing again happened, I mean, you seen a big cloud of dust again. But I was nowhere near that. I went down to South Street to help out with other EMTs, set up triage.

C. JACKSON

Q. Were you hearing any radio transmissions?

A. I heard a lot of radio transmissions.

Q. A lot of radio transmissions?

A. Especially when the first tower came down.

All I heard was Mayday and 1013, 1013. I heard a lot of commotion, a lot of screaming, a lot of yelling, help, you know, a lot of calls for help.

Q. Then you ended up you were at triage and were you receiving any injuries, people coming in?

A. We didn't receive any injuries. The only thing, people kept asking was can they hold a face mask, a mask for the dust. That was about it.

Q. How long did you stay there?

A. I stayed there until 11:00 o'clock that night.

Q. You weren't injured in any way; you were okay, breathing and everything?

A. Yes. I just lost all my equipment, my radio.

Q. And your vehicle, I guess; that was under the rubble?

A. The vehicle was under the rubble, but they got it out like a week later.

Q. Your partner was okay?

A. My partner was okay.

C. JACKSON

Q. All right. Is there anything else you can think of that you want to add?

A. I try to forget.

Q. I understand.

A. There's nothing else I could add or want to talk about.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time is now 0627 hours. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

File No. 9110171

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT BRIAN GORDON

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

B. GORDON

LIEUTENANT DUN: Today's date is October 30, 2001. The time is 0820 hours. I'm Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department working with Murray Murad. We're here interviewing Brian Gordon.

Q. Please state your title and your shield.

A. EMT, 5546.

Q. Can you give us the story or your account of what happened on the day of September 11th, 2001?

A. Me and Brian Smith had just gotten back from a late job and we were -- we had come in and dropped off the vehicle, changed over vehicles because we were 31 Henry, Tour 1. We had come into the station, did a few things, dropped off our equipment, and Brian -- we were leaving and we were walking up the ramp out here. We got into the parking lot and Brian said did you hear that boom? We had heard just a boom and we looked over and we saw a big ball of fire coming out of the tower.

So we ran back down here and we said somebody just bombed the tower. So Lieutenant McCarthy gave us ambulance 217 and he told us be careful and go over, sign on, but be careful.

Q. So your lieutenant told you you were going to be an extra unit?

A. Yes.

B. GORDON

Q. Okay.

A. I came out and checked out the ambulance real quick and Brian came out with all our equipment and I signed us on. As soon as we signed on, we said we're available, do you need us to go to the staging area? And they said yes. So we left from here and went into Manhattan and we were coming down --

Q. Which way did you come into the city; over the bridge or through the tunnel?

A. Over the bridge.

Q. Okay.

A. I think we were coming down Church Street. I'm pretty sure we were because this is where Brooks Brothers is, right?

Q. Right.

A. Because I remember going past Brooks Brothers. Actually, like City Hall Park up here? We came down that way.

Q. You came down Broadway and you cut across one of these streets.

A. Yes. I think it was Dey Street.

Q. Okay.

A. There were people over here bleeding and stuff. We came down Broadway to Dey Street and --

B. GORDON

what's that private ambulance company?

Q. Metro?

A. Metro Care. They had a patient here having an MI and they're like we need you guys to take care of this patient, and we were like, you know, we're BLS, too. We can't do nothing. Wait for medics.

So we went down Dey Street to Church Street and we were coming down Church Street and I remember seeing like -- we were in front of Brooks Brothers, little steps there. There were like briefcases and people's breakfast and shoes we saw laying on the stairs and stuff. We had already gone past the intersection of Liberty and a police officer or somebody, it was either you or a police officer was up at the intersection. I can't really remember.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: It wasn't me because --

EMT GORDON: You were down in the firehouse.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: I was at the firehouse.

PD had requested an ambulance to respond to the firehouse for a couple injuries.

A. Yes. That police officer flagged us here and said we need you down at 10 and 10; there's people coming out of the Trade Center and they're hurt pretty bad. So Brian had to back up, so I jumped out and I



B. GORDON

ran, grabbed my tech bag and ran.

Q. Towards?

A. Towards the 10 house on Liberty.

Q. So you ran west on Liberty to the 10/10 house.

A. I fell outside of 10 and 10. I stepped on a leg and I fell. There was debris just from the first tower all over there and everything. So I got up and I went into the 10/10 house and I saw Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Murad.

A. -- Murad. Then Brian backed the ambulance in and we started taking care of patients in there. Can we go into like what kind of injuries they had?

Q. Yes. You know your stuff. That's the purpose of all this now.

A. Out on the street, I remember I saw a little shoe that still had a foot in it, a little girl's shoe, and I could see body parts everywhere pretty much. We went in and there was a little Chinese lady and she was severally burned and Rob, that fireman from Commack, I don't know his name, he was already in there, too, and there were firemen from 10 and 10. I didn't see any guys from 10 Truck in there. I remember seeing guys from 10 Engine and I think --

B. GORDON

LIEUTENANT MURAD: 10 Truck took off already.

A. Yes.

Q. So you saw the engine, but there were a lot of guys that were still coming in?

A. Yes. I don't remember really seeing any guys from 10 Truck. Actually, I did. I saw one guy. He came in and just grabbed his gear and ran out. So that guy, Rob, told me what we had, and then Lieutenant Murad told me we had a guy in the back that was hurt pretty bad, had a broken hip. So I went back there and a little Chinese guy named Foo -- I can't remember if that was his last name or his first name -- was sitting in a chair and he wouldn't let me touch him and he wouldn't let go of his briefcase. I mean, I couldn't even take his vitals because he wouldn't let me go near him. So finally I basically forced him to move his hands so I could cut his pants and check his injuries.

Then a fireman, he identified himself to me as Paul Pansini from 10 Engine, came and helped me put Foo in a KED. I put it upside-down with the head down here, to stabilize his hip, and he helped me hold him up and do all that. Then, as he was leaving, I said be careful out there, and he's not here with us anymore.

B. GORDON

So we got him in the KED and he still wouldn't let me anywhere -- he was guarding his chest with his briefcase. So I told him, I said, look, I've got to take your blood pressure. So he said hold on, hold on, and he snapped open his briefcase and he took a wad of hundred dollar bills, it must have been four or five inches thick, out of his pocket and threw it in there, and I looked in the briefcase and it was already full of hundred dollar bills, stacks of them, all the way across, with plane tickets and passports. There must have been \$500,000 in there at least, if not like a million. He took two wads out like that and threw it in the briefcase. So I cut his sleeve off and took his pressure and he was stabilized.

So Brian was working on the other patients. We started doing the triage tags. Then I went up towards the front of the building and I heard a loud sound and the second plane, I guess, had hit the Trade Center. I ran outside with Brian. We were looking and we were just like holy shit, you know, this is really, really bad. There was pieces of the plane falling, and I don't know if it was the plane or the building or whatever, but something hit the ambulance, too, in the front of the ambulance and like spiderwebbed our

B. GORDON

windshield and everything and kind of caved it in a little bit. I don't know what it was, but I was told that it was a piece of the engine from the second plane. I don't know.

So we went back in and kept working on our patients. I started doing all the triage tags and I went to work on the little lady, the little Chinese lady. The firemen had come back in, a bunch of firemen, and I guess went upstairs and stripped their bunks and brought down all blankets and pillows and stuff and rearranged some chairs and got everybody who was going to come, who was there, stabilized and whatever. I don't even know how long it was, but it was a while.

Q. Did you get a lot of patients while you were there?

A. I'd say between ten and 15 patients. It wasn't that many. I remember seeing a guy out in front of I guess it's 4 World Trade Center? Isn't that the one that was like -- or was that Tower 2?

LIEUTENANT MURAD: I think that was Tower 2 maybe.

EMT GORDON: Because there was a man like trying to get in the doors of Tower 2 and I remember

B. GORDON

you or -- we were both yelling at him.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Right. There were the cops and we were all yelling at the guy to get away from there.

EMT GORDON: Right.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Even the detectives that were over there.

EMT GORDON: Yes.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: I remember that.

A. We were yelling to him get out, get away from the building, come over here, come over here, and he wouldn't leave. He looked like he was trying to get back in. Lieutenant Murad said there's nothing you can do, come back in here.

So we were in there working on the patients some more, going around making sure that everybody that was in there was stable, taking vitals and wrapping up the little Chinese lady. It was a while after the second plane hit and firemen are coming in and out the whole time and there was a Captain, I think he was from Engine 10, he was in there most of the time. Actually, I remember, when we first got in there, the Captain from 10 Truck was in there just for like a minute and then he left, too.

B. GORDON

LIEUTENANT MURAD: No.

EMT GORDON: It wasn't him? I remember seeing some Captain from a truck company.

Q. So you were in the house. You were treating patients.

A. There was like no more patients coming. There was like nobody coming in. Nobody was -- I expected there to be thousands of patients.

Q. Right.

A. So I went out, you know, I stepped out of the bay and I was looking up at the towers and it was like raining paper and it was burning real bad and I started noticing people jumping. Then I went back in and I was tending to the patients some more and we get a report of a fireman down on Liberty Street west of the firehouse, and Brian told me to stay with the patients and he was going to go check on the fireman.

So he went and checked on the fireman and then he came back and he said we're going to set up a rehab. He said we're going to go break into the snack trucks and take their Snapples and waters and stuff, and he went back out, and then like maybe a minute after he left, I heard the tower fall. The tower started to fall. It was like real loud, like the No. 4

B. GORDON

train going over your head. They came running in and everybody was screaming the towers are falling, the towers are falling, run.

So basically all the patients started getting up and running to the back and so did I, and the tower hit and it was like it picked me up and threw me. I had somebody land on me, a couple people landed on top of me, and I hurt my shoulder. It was like black. You couldn't see, couldn't breathe. My first instinct, I started screaming for Brian, my partner. I was really scared that he was dead because I knew he was outside. But he answered me and we found each other. He had a cut on his face. He was bleeding.

It was just -- it was like being in hell. You couldn't breathe at all. You tried to get low to the floor and you couldn't breathe. So everybody got into the kitchen, in the kitchen of the 10 house.

Q. That was in the back of the firehouse?

A. In the back of the firehouse in 10 house, and there was a fireman back there screaming. He'd broke his leg. Brian was back there with me and there was a couple firemen and an officer. He was the Captain at Engine 10. I know that. Brian told me what we need to do is splint his leg, get a scoop stretcher, go out and

B. GORDON

see if you can get anything out of the ambulance.

So I went out to the ambulance and all my gear was inside the ambulance up in the passenger's seat. I'd lost my helmet and coat. So an officer yelled at me, told me to grab a coat and helmet off the rack and put it on, so I did, and I got out to the ambulance and the dust was like over my ankles. There wasn't any big pieces really in there, but like the doors --

Q. So after the building collapsed, you were able to move about inside the house?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So I got into the ambulance and I opened up the back. I was able to get into the compartment where they hold the long boards and stuff. I grabbed the scoop stretcher and grabbed some splints and some cravats, found my tech bag and...

Q. Just treated patients?

A. Yes. I started to treat the patients again. But after I got all that stuff, I set it down and I went to see if the radio still worked.

Q. Did it work?

A. Yes. The radio was still going in the



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ambulance, but it was pretty fucked up. The whole thing was full of dust and it was crushed down in the front. So I radioed a Mayday.

Q. On the portable?

A. No.

Q. On the vehicle radio?

A. On the vehicle radio.

Q. Okay?

A. So then I went back in and Brian and I started cutting the fireman's turnout pants off of him and his boots and tried to get his leg as straight as possible, splinted him up. There were a few other firemen that were helping us with the scoop stretcher and moving things back so we could get around him.

Q. Were there a lot of civilians in there as well?

A. There was -- yes. All our patients were in there.

Q. So you had a lot of civilians and some off-duty MOS?

A. Yes. The guy who was hurt told me he was a cadet. That's all I remember. I don't remember his name or anything. The back window was blown out and everything and by now there were more firemen and

B. GORDON

stuff. Not everybody was in that kitchen as far as firemen go. They were going in and out through the kitchen and into the doorway on the left. It looked like there was a stairwell in there. There was like a whole company of firemen showed up at the window, so we were passing out patients through the window and then we passed the fireman through the window.

Q. Now, the second building was still up?

A. The second building was still up.

Q. Okay.

A. Then I don't even know how long it was, it was a while we were doing all this, and then the Captain, he was the last one in there with us and he told us we've got to check the building, make sure we don't leave anybody. So I went out into the bay, checked the bay, make sure there was nobody out there, and that's when I heard the second tower start to fall. So I ran down the hall and Brian came out it looked like from the stairwell area and the Captain was there with him and we went into the bathroom and laid on the floor in the bathroom while the tower was falling. That was it. I said we're dead.

The tower fell, it got black again, but this time we had cling wrapped around our faces as masks,

B. GORDON

and we weren't dead, it was just black. Then it started to die down a little bit and we got up and we said that's it, everybody out of here because the building, it sounded like the building was groaning. I don't know if that was the building or what was outside or whatever. But we jumped out the window and there was Foo right underneath the windowsill with Rob, and the Captain came out and I had grabbed a hook because somebody left a pole in there, and the Captain started going off with the other firemen, so I gave him the hook and I said, here, you might need that and waved good-bye.

I had managed to grab my tech bag, too. So we made our way, me, Brian, Rob and Foo, up Cedar Street to, I guess --

Q. Trinity?

A. Trinity? Is this still Church Street?

Q. Yes.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Church turns into Trinity.

A. Okay. So it was Trinity Street, then. We walked Foo -- with his frigging briefcase, you know, he couldn't walk, so we had to carry him. We tried to carry him one arm over each other and he had that

B. GORDON

frigging briefcase, it hit me in the face. So I just said, Brian, let go of him, and I fireman carried him for a little ways and I put him down and then Brian did it and we took turns.

We made it up to 2 Rector Street and I noticed there was people in the lobby in there and the lights were on and it was clean in there. So we brought Foo in there and sat him in a chair. They had the radio on and everything in there and we were hearing reports of hijacked airplanes and this, that and the other thing over the radio, and then the Pentagon got hit, and the security officer at the desk or the fire safety officer, whatever he was, said that there was somebody on the 7th floor having chest pains, and he said there was nobody up working above the 7th floor. So I ran up to the 7th floor and there was just an older guy in there and he was having it looked like an anxiety attack or something.

Q. Were the elevators working in that building?

A. Yes, they were working. But I didn't know if the building had been hit with debris or anything else, so we told the safety officer to turn off the elevators, lock them down in the lobby. I came back down and I met Brian in the stairwell and he said,

B. GORDON

look, he said, we've got to get these people out of here. This was on like the second floor. So we came back down to the lobby and we told the guy to put an announcement over for all the people in the building to come down to the lobby.

So people started coming down the stairs and we went back up the stairs and we were checking the floors. So all these people were standing in the lobby, there must have been maybe a hundred in the first group, and Brian jumped up on the security desk and was like giving them orders, directions and stuff. We gave Rob our stuff.

Then there was cops outside and they came in and they said just come out the door and go straight and head towards the light, you know, that's the way out of here. So we had Rob go with the first group out and we waited for more people to come because there was still more people coming. We were waiting. We couldn't carry Foo anymore. So we waited, and then a cop car pulled up outside, so we went out and stuffed Foo in the cop car. Then we came back in and another cop came in and there was like probably about a hundred people in the lobby and they didn't have anything to cover their faces with, so I took off my shirt and

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handed a lady my knife and I said make some dust masks out of it.

The cop led that group of people out, and we made one last announcement and we waited like five more minutes and nobody else came down, so Brian and I went outside and that's where we met with Lieutenant Murad again. I thought he was dead. I lost him after that. I didn't see him again. But seeing him was like seeing Santa Claus. I was happy. He told us he had a car just a couple blocks away.

So I don't even know which way we walked. I know we walked by a church.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: We made it down to Pearl.

A. Pearl?

Q. (Inaudible)?

A. Yes. We walked and we walked and walked and walked and then walked some more, and my ankle was really hurting. So I told Lieutenant Murad, I said, I can't walk anymore, you know, I need to sit down for a minute, and he said, all right, you two wait here and I'll go get the car. So we waited there and we sat on a vendor's table, a guy selling belts, and Lieutenant Murad came back with his car, it was all fucked up. The back window was smashed in, it was full of dust and

B. GORDON

debris, it was all crunched up in the back.

Q. It looked like a Rolls-Royce, I bet.

A. Yes. It was like a Sherman tank to me. I didn't care. So we got in and we drove and we got to 100 Wall Street and we saw a conditions boss, an EMS conditions boss, Conditions 55.

Q. You don't know his name, do you?

A. No, I don't. Brian would remember his name. We talked about him this morning. He had braces. He was kind of a dork.

Q. Okay.

A. We identified ourselves as EMS and he told us, well, good, because we've got a patient for you. So we went into 100 Wall Street and there was a lady in there, she was having a legit anxiety attack, you know, there wasn't nothing wrong with her. I mean, we didn't have any equipment. He took his oxygen. He was like, all right, go take care of this patient, but he left us with nothing. I was like whatever.

She sat there and she was talking to us and she was more concerned about us. I don't know, we sat there for it must have been an hour, hour and a half it seemed like. Brian kept using his portable to radio out, 09, we need an ambulance at this location, what's

B. GORDON

the ETA? All I kept remember hearing is there'll be one there when it gets there, basically.

So an NYPD traffic van pulled up outside and Lieutenant Murad was outside and I was like, we need to get back to Brooklyn. I don't even know what time this is. This is maybe an hour or two after the second tower fell. I'm not even sure. But we were hurting pretty bad. So we wheeled this lady in her chair out and they put her in the traffic van.

Then Conditions 55 pulled up again and he's like, I'm ordering you to go to the hospital with the patient, you need to go to the emergency room. I was like, no. Me and Brian were both like, no, we need to go back to our station, and he was like, I'm ordering you, and we were like, basically, what I'll do is (inaudible), you can kiss my ass. I'm sorry I may get a CD out of that but --

Q. It's okay. Listen. In times of crisis, all bets are off.

A. Exactly. So he said whatever, just get back to Brooklyn then and make sure you go to an emergency room. So, you know, yes, sir. He said go that way to the pier.

Q. Which was South Ferry?



B. GORDON

A. Was it South Ferry? It's right down from Battalion 4.

Q. Probably South Ferry.

A. Probably. I know it was on the East River. We made it down to South Ferry. There was a ferry slip there and there was like thousands of people there. It wasn't too far we had to walk, but it seemed like miles. There was a bench down there at the right end of the ferry slip, and we sat on the bench and cops saw us sitting there and so they all ran over and they were like, oh, are you guys all right, are you all right? People were handing me cigarettes because my cigarettes were in the ambulance. A priest came over and he gave me my last rites. So at this point I'm thinking, damn, I must be pretty fucked up. Do I got something sticking in me or something?

So the cops basically carried us, escorted us up to the ferry to Brooklyn. They called it back because it had just left. We got on the ferry and --

Q. The PD boat, right?

A. No. We initially got on the ferry and people started running up to us, clapping, cheering, crying, giving us water bottles and water and everything. Then PD came back on and took us off and brought us to the

B. GORDON

end of the slip there and the harbor patrol boat came over. I guess it's harbor patrol.

Q. Yes. PD boat.

A. PD boat. They put us on the PD boat and brought us to the Navy yard. We got off at the Navy yard and I remember looking back across the river and just seeing a huge billow of smoke and dust and it was horrible. Then some guy in a van --

Q. You ended up in Brooklyn?

A. Yes.

Q. Where in Brooklyn; by the Navy yard?

A. In the Navy yard, where the Fire boats are.

Q. Okay.

A. There were no Fire boats there, but that's where we got off. There were the firemen all there from -- I guess they were from the boats and they helped us off the boat. A guy -- I don't remember where he was from. I think he was from Cumberland Hospital, in a Cumberland Hospital community van or something. He picked us up and he brought us down here to the station.

We came in the station and everybody saw us and started like freaking out. Not freaking out, but they were like are you guys all right, are you guys all

B. GORDON

right, giving us 02 and making us drink saline. Somebody gave me a thing of saline to drink and I almost threw up. So our superior officer, Captain Fried here, ordered us to go to the emergency room. So they long boarded us and collared us and the whole nine and put us in an ambulance and brought us to KCH, and they took care of us at KCH.

They admitted Brian. They released me. I told them I wanted to stay with Brian because the whole time when we were at the Trade Center and everything, I kept telling him -- he's like, oh, I've got to go out here to do this, I've got to go out here to do that. So I was getting mad at him. I was like, you're my partner. I ain't going to leave you. I'm coming with you. He's like, no, you've got to stay with the patients. So my partner was fucked up and I wasn't going to leave him. Some doctor was like, well, no, you can't stay with him, you've got to leave, and I basically told him go fuck himself, started getting in an argument with him, and that Captain -- what's her name? Red hair.

Q. Gloffke.

A. Gloffke. She pulled me aside and talked to that doctor and they're like, all right, you can stay

B. GORDON

with him. So they brought me back here and I took a shower and I went back and I stayed with Brian overnight, and that's when we were actually watching CNN, watching the towers fall, when the plane hit it, over and over and over and over again, and that's when his mother-in-law called him and asked him if he'd heard anybody from hazmat, and that's when he realized his father was there. So he called hazmat and his father was missing and he was pretty upset. I feel bad for him. I knew his father for years and years. He was a good man, wrote the manual on 288, hazmat. Good man. Basically, they released him the next day and we came back to the station and we went home.

LIEUTENANT MURAD: Okay. That concludes the interview and --

LIEUTENANT DUN: Just one quick question. When the initial call came in, were you operating on Citywide?

EMT GORDON: Yes.

LIEUTENANT DUN: From the beginning?

EMT GORDON: Yes. When we logged on, we were on Brooklyn North, and then we said we're available, do you need us to go to the staging area? They said yes, we do, switch to Citywide, so we switched to Citywide.

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LIEUTENANT MURAD: Okay.

LIEUTENANT DUN: The time is 0910 and that  
concludes the interview.

File No. 9110172

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JAY SWITHERS

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. SWITHERS

MR. MURAD: Today is October 30, 2001. The time is 14 hundred hours. I'm Murray Murad with George Cundari of the Fire Department of New York City. I'm conducting an interview with --

MR. SWITHERS: Jay Swithers, Captain of the Bureau of Health Services of the Fire Department.

MR. MURAD: This is being conducted at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials regarding the events that took place on September 11, 2001. Go ahead.

MR. SWITHERS: On the morning of September 11, which happened to be my 40th birthday, I was hanging out downstairs in the Bureau of Health Services down on the second floor, having a donut and coffee. My pager went off, indicating there was a plane into the building in the World Trade Center. At that point I looked into the lounge area where they have a television and I saw the gaping hole in the north tower.

At that point, I prepared my equipment, I changed into my urban search and rescue uniform, including boots, EBU pants and work shirt and carried my equipment, all my equipment down to my office. I then went up to RCC to see if they

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implemented or contacted the Urban Search and Rescue medics, to see if there were any orders given at that time. There were no orders given. I looked for transportation to get to the site. When I returned down to my office where my equipment was, I was told that a second plane had hit the south tower.

At that point, I picked up all my equipment, big duffle bag and started to run to the bridge. I was prepared to run over the Brooklyn Bridge; however, I was stopped by a police officer who told me to wait and that something would be coming over the bridge to drive me over. I was picked up by a city car, black unmarked, Crown Victoria with lights and sirens, which came to a skidding halt in the third lane of the Brooklyn Bridge and the man opened up the door and said get in.

I opened up the back door, threw my equipment into the back seat. He asked me who I was. I told him I was a paramedic and he proceeded to drive across the bridge. As I got to the other side, he got on his PA and was screaming get out of way, I have a paramedic on board, all the way down to the World Trade Center.



J. SWITHERS

Q. Was he a police officer?

A. I don't know. He was a guy in a suit. He dropped me off at the corner of Vesey Street and Church, where I was able to see a small triage center set up one block away on Church and Fulton, directly in front of the Millennium Hotel.

Q. Who was there?

A. Janice Ocheski. There were also the paramedics from the Bureau of Health Services. Corey, what's Corey's last name. I don't know.

MR. MURAD: Romanowski.

A. Bonnie.

Q. Regan?

A. Regan. And Carlos Lillo was there with us, and one of my employees who works light duty, Farouk Mohammed. There were a lot of other people there but those are the ones that I remember.

Q. At the triage center?

A. Manny Delgado was there, Dr. Cherson was there, and about 20 people all together in the contingency. While I was there, my primary goal was to try to find Chief Downey, because Chief Downey is the Chief of Special Operations Command and that's who the USR paramedics would report to. Nobody could tell me

J. SWITHERS

where he was. Most of the EMS people didn't know what special command was or who Chief Downey was.

I realized they were overwhelmed and I proceeded to help them. One particular person that came to mind was a very obese African American woman who came out of the building and was being assisted by other people when she sat down on the wall in front of the Millennium Hotel. When I went over to her, they said that she has asthma. She was hysterical. I listened to her lung sounds. Her lung sounds were clear. I prepared to calm her down and was giving her oxygen. When I was giving her the oxygen, setting up the tank, you could hear a loud rumble. Somebody said run for your life. I turned to see who was yelling run.

At that point I looked back and most of the people who were triaged in that area with the triage tags on them got up and ran. I took a quick glance at the building and while I didn't see it falling, I saw a large section of it blasting out, which led me to believe it was just an explosion. I thought it was a secondary device, but I knew that we had to go.

When I looked down at my patient, she was no longer there. She had already ran and I started to

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run. I ran eastbound on Fulton Street, but I only got to the loading bins of the bays of the Millennium Hotel. At the loading bays of the Millennium Hotel, there was a large truck backed up to the bay door, which was closed. I dove into the back of the truck and you could see everything getting real real dark and the sound of large pieces of metal were falling all over, making loud pinging noises, just all over, all around the vehicle. I managed to crawl up to the garage door and cupped my hands in front of my face, between my face and the door and at that point it was like a major storm had hit; continuous blasting of debris hitting my face, hitting my body. It was like a major storm.

I had my helmet on and the only thing I could breathe was if I was just breathing dirt. I was breathing dirt and for the few moments I was breathing dirt, I prayed that if I was going to die I wouldn't suffocate and I prayed that if I was going to die - the large I beams were falling and I could hear them - that one of them would hit me and not let me suffer. I had no clue what had happened. It became very very dark and I just struggled to breathe. At that point thoughts went through my mind such as I should have

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stayed in the office.

Also the fact that I was going to die on my birthday was horrible and that I couldn't remember if I actually kissed my kids in the morning or last night. Numerous thoughts.

When the sound had stopped, my ears were ringing. It was so loud and it was real real black and I felt somebody grab my helmet and say we have a firefighter here. He could help us out. I didn't tell him I was a firefighter, but I didn't know if I could see or if I was alive. I said is it real dark or am I blind. The voice came back and said it's just really dark. The group of people said what do we do. They were hacking and coughing. I didn't know what to say, so I said we need to know how many people are here. Count out loud. The first person counted one. The second person counted two. The third person counted three. I was about to count four when somebody else counted four. I was again about to -- and this went all the way up to nine. I didn't realize there were nine people there.

Q. All in the loading dock area?

A. All in the loading dock area. They cried what do we do. We stayed there a moment and nobody was

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really trapped. We were able to see a little orange with about a foot between the top of the truck and the dirt and we realized we weren't trapped. Everybody pushed their ways through into the orange and they were able to see just enough to get out. Everybody had dirt and soot all over them. Some of them were bleeding, but they took off up the block. I remember getting out and being really confused and turning back and looking at building number 5 and just seeing orange and feeling heat, not knowing what was going on, or if it was on fire.

I started walking east. As I walked east I approached a Fire Department command car, a Suburban with the lights on and the engines running. I saw someone who I figured to be a police officer, take his gun out of the holster and start whacking the drivers side window. I said stop, what are you doing, he said we are just trying to get out of here. I said don't do that and he wandered off. As I walked up the street I tripped over a television camera for a television network that somebody had dropped. I proceeded up to the corner of Broadway and Fulton, where I found Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck. Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck had a radio, which I didn't have. We decided we were going

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to regroup. We saw very few EMS people. The only EMS people I remember seeing at that point was Lieutenant Patrick Scaringello, and he insisted that we should try to salvage a vehicle that was on fire on Church Street.

I told him there was no reason to try to salvage a vehicle. We didn't know what had happened and he sort of wandered off. We agreed that we were trying to regroup. Patients were just coming out of the woodwork; some badly injured, some being gathered, carried by citizens, some being carried by civil service workers. We decided to put them into an ATM on that corner, at the corner of Fulton and Broadway, where there was an ATM machine, a little area that we could put people. We started to place them into that area.

Within a few moments, I regrouped with Bruce Medjuck and I asked him to tell them on the radio to send us MTA buses to get people out. That didn't happen. But one thing that did happen was an ambulance pulled up which was very clean. So I assumed that the vehicle had not been in the - what I thought was an explosion at the time, but was the first collapse.

When the ambulance pulled up, two EMTs jumped

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out. They gave out simple face - dust masks to people and people started to charge the ambulance. One man was actually brought over in a wheelbarrow. When the people started to charge the ambulance, they started to climb in. There had to be maybe 5, 6 patients in there, when the original African American, heavy set black woman came to me and she was once again crying. I was actually happy to see her because I knew that she had survived the collapse and I knew she was the one person that I was primarily responsible for. Although later on, and I knew at that time, that there were people in that triage area that probably did not survive because they were not able to get up. I knew that one person did survive.

I wasn't able to lift her because I didn't have the strength, but I helped her get up on to the back step of the ambulance and pushed her into the back of the ambulance while the EMTs in that ambulance were crying no more, we are full, we are full, no more. I pushed her and she wound up laying on the floor of the ambulance. I was just about able to close the door of the ambulance by pushing her feet in a little further. I had to push her feet in and close the door. At that point, I asked Bruce Medjuck do we have tracking on

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this ambulance and he said tracking, it's like the end of the world. This is a major disaster. Just get them out of here. I agreed.

While standing there once again trying to figure out what to do next, I saw car 33, which is the medical car that is the doctor's car, Crown Vic from the Bureau of Health Services that the doctor drives around. The Bureau of Health Services pulled up just behind the ambulance. Inside that car was Dr. Ortiz. She is a female doctor that works in the Bureau of Health Services, a driver and 3 firefighters were sitting in the back seat of the Crown Vic, one of which I know very well. She had only opened up the window maybe 3 quarters of the way and she was holding her jacket in front of her face not to get the debris or dust that was in the air into her airway.

I told her that many people died, a lot of people from the Bureau of Health Services seemed to be dead, I don't know where they are. They seemed to be missing. I don't remember saying there was a collapse. I remember saying I don't know what happened. It's real real bad. At that point they had told me we will pull over and help you. I told them we were regrouping. They said they were going to pull



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over and help. They turned the vehicle left so they were facing east on Fulton and pulled over. When they started to get out of that vehicle, which I didn't see, but they told me later on, that that's where the second building, building number 2, the north tower, started to collapse.

I immediately just started to run, first north and then east on to Ann Street. As I was running I was looking over my shoulder and I heard the rumbling and I saw the cloud chasing me very quickly with debris. Once again falling. I saw a bunch of people standing in a loading bay with the door halfway down saying come in here, follow me in here. When I got there the man said let's pull down the door. There had to be ten of us trying to pull down the door. As we were pulling down the door the cloud and the thrust of the cloud knocked us all down to our knees and it continued to blow continuously into this bay door.

The people in the back were screaming. I managed to get back up from my knees to my feet and grabbed the door and looked over and there was maybe only three or five guys left trying to pull the door down. As we continued to try to pull the door down, the door actually started to go up. I didn't realize

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it was going up until I realized I was off my feet. I said I had to let go. I anticipated landing on my feet but with the continuous thrust of the air coming through, I actually wound up face down on my helmet. I was stunned and confused, why was I down. I didn't know if I was dead or what was happening, once again taking in a lot of the dirt. I didn't know what to do. Somebody grabbed the back of my collar and dragged me down the loading bay to safety.

At that point I didn't need their help any more and they were strangling me and finally let go of my collar. I could get up. We entered down into the main hallway of the building. We got into the building and another group of people found the door into what seemed to be Genovese drugstore. We went into the Genovese drugstore and a large group of people pushed for the Poland Springs water that was on the shelves. A security guard that didn't know what was happening in the store said stop, what's going on, are you all crazy. A police officer pulled out a gun and pointed it at the security guard. These people need the water. Don't you understand what's happening. The security guard said he didn't know what was happening. He said it's quite all right. Have all the water you

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want.

I was confused. I didn't know what was happening. I looked out the windows of the store. Complete blackness. Not knowing what was happening. I started to walk through the store and realized there were a lot of things that people could use in the store. I found small duffle bags. I took three or four of them off the shelf. I was stuffing water and Band-Aids, some things as ridiculous as Tampons, making goodie bags for people to take out with them and for myself.

I prepared the bags and the people then rushed the door. There was a police officer standing in the doorway and said nobody will leave the room, nobody will leave the store. At that point I figured maybe I will call my wife. I picked up my cell phone and I managed to get through. My wife picked up the phone. She was hysterical crying. I told her I was okay. At that point I asked her what had happened. She told me that they are gone. They are not there. I couldn't imagine that both the buildings were gone.

I said what are you talking about. Are the children gone? What you are you talking about. She told me the buildings are gone. I said what buildings

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are gone. She said the World Trade Center is gone. I said how do you know. She said I have seen it on TV. She was watching regular TV and switched to CNN because she lost regular TV. She told me not more than two floors of that building could be there. I was stunned.

At that point somebody yelled that there was a bomb in the building that we were in. The police officer opened up the door and let people out. I asked if there was anybody left in that building. They said there were a couple of people maybe in the basement. So I ran down into the basement, maybe three floors, and there were a couple of maintenance workers who apparently didn't speak English. I told them they had to leave the building and there was probably a bomb. They looked at me and said that they had to clock out first or check with their supervisor.

I said I'm telling you to leave. I'm leaving. You can stay as long as you want, but I'm leaving. I ran upstairs and I left the building. There was no bomb in the building.

When I got outside I met up with EMT Farouk Mohammed, who happens to be an Islamic Muslim, which I didn't know at the time. He happened to work light

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duty with me in the Bureau of Health Services because of a shoulder injury. He was walking with two men and had a plastic garbage bag and was giving out water and rags to people in the street. He approached me and gave me a big hug. He asked me if I was okay. I told him I had ringing in my ears but I seemed to be okay.

At that point we met up with Manny Delgado and Dr. Cherson and they told us that the people were grouping at South Street Seaport, which was east, so we started to head east. While we were heading east, Farouk was able to hand out water and rags, but we had no other equipment available. People said to us what do we do, what do we do. I told them it was in their best interest to run northeast, to get out of there. We had no medical equipment.

When we got up to, I guess Pearl Street and Fulton Street, a man came to us and said that he had an OR available in one of the stores, I guess a clinic. All we needed was equipment and people. I said that we didn't have equipment or people, but I would keep that in mind. We walked another block east, right up to the edge of South Street Seaport where the plaza is and that's where I saw car 33 up on the curb. It looked like it had crashed into a pole or something. It was

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sitting there. Nobody was in it. These were the original people I saw.

We waited there for 2 or 3 minutes. We couldn't figure out where they went, so we continued. When we got to South Street Seaport, somebody told us that's not where they were. The people were regrouping at the ferry terminal. Farouk Mohammed and I walked to the ferry terminal and started helping with a triage center with very few patients. It was at that point that we got separated and I was asked to go up to Chambers and West for UCAR responsibilities. I got a ride from a Lutheran Medical Center ambulance as far north as possible to that area.

I walked up there. That's just about my story.

Q. Did you have any portable radios or radio contact with anybody?

A. I had no radio contact except when Bruce Medjuck was standing next to me at the -- well, I had radio contact through people while we were doing triage in front of the Millennium and following that the only radio contact I had was through Bruce Medjuck, who got on the air and said I have Captain Swithers with me and we are trying to regroup.

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Q. That was at Citywide?

A. I don't know what it was done on.

Q. You never saw EMS Chiefs or Chief Downey?

A. Thank god I never had the opportunity to see Chief Downey. I didn't see any EMS Chiefs until I regrouped at the South Street Seaport and that's where I saw Chief McCracken for the first time and Chief Vallani.

MR. CUNARDI: I would like to thank you Captain Swithers. The time is 1425 hours. This now concludes the interview with Captain Jay Swithers.

THE WITNESS: I saw Chief Vallani and Chief McCracken at the ferry terminal. Just a correction. I said South Street Seaport.

File No. 9110173

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT VERONICA JACOBS

Interview Date: October 30, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



V. JACOBS

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is October 30, 2001. The time is 2155 hours. I'm Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, title and assigned command area regarding September 11, 2001.

A. My name is Veronica Jacobs, Battalion 58. I'm an EMT.

Q. Also present at this interview is?

A. Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force.

Q. Veronica, were you working on the morning of September 11, 2001?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you please tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A. Well, when I got home from walking the circle with my son and my neighbor told me that a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. So I went inside to watch TV to see what happened and I called my

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Battalion to see if they needed to me to come in. I spoke to Lieutenant Hoover who told me yes, come into the Battalion and work overtime.

So anyway I took a shower, got dressed and jumped in my car and proceeded to come from New Jersey to Brooklyn. When I got to the Goethals Bridge there was a checkpoint with state troopers and police officers who were checking vehicles and stopping everybody and checking ID. I told them that I needed to proceed over to Brooklyn to work overtime for the World Trade Center and they told me you are either going to the World Trade Center straight from here or you go home. So I told them to lead the way.

I got a police escort from the Goethals Bridge to Beekman Hospital, and I parked on the sidewalk and they parked next to me on the street and we walked with my thumb out to the World Trade Center, at least towards the blackness, the darkness. We couldn't see anything. There was so much debris and dust everywhere.

We went inside Beekman first and I got a couple of maps, I tried to call the Battalion and tell them I was in Manhattan instead of coming to Brooklyn, but the phone was busy, so I proceeded with them to try

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and find the EMS command, wherever that could have been, because we couldn't see street signs.

When we got I guess about two blocks from the World Trade Center, I couldn't tell you what street we were on.

Q. Do you know about what time this was?

A. It was about 9:05.

Q. 9:05?

A. Yes. There were people running towards us and telling us they needed help down that way and pointing behind them, so we proceeded to go down that way, hoping there was EMS or somebody there.

When I finally realized where I was, I was standing in front of the building that didn't come down yet, the tower that didn't come down yet, not even knowing that the first one came down. I didn't know what it was that they were running from.

I look up and I'm like this looks like the World Trade Center. I think we should just back up and start looking for my command, and the trooper was like okay, let's start walking. All of a sudden a large rumbling and people were running and jumping and hitting the floor next to me and it just got black and gray and I couldn't see and I was running for my life

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with my hands in front of me, because I didn't know what the hell was happening.

We tripped and we fell and I lost the troopers and I don't know where they went, but they are alive, I ended up finding out, because their car was gone when I got back. So I assume they are alive. Their car is gone, so somebody got it.

When I finally got out of the dust, tripping several times and crashing into telephone poles as I was running, because I couldn't see, it cleared up about 10 minutes later, but as I'm running I'm trying to help people who needed help to run or to walk or just to breathe, trying to cover them with my shirt or whatever I could do, because I had two masks on my face from the hospital.

When I realized what happened, we walked around, I guess Vesey Street or something like that. That was the only street sign that we could see. I don't know how far that was from the World Trade Center, still to this day. But we walked around the corner and I could see the first building that fell and they were telling me this is the building that fell, a couple of firefighters, and they said how they lost their people in the first building and I was like well,

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what did we just run from. I guess we went almost back to Beekman, halfway back to Beekman, and we met up with some firefighters there. I'm saying we. It was me and a couple of firemen that made it out I guess.

They said the second building came down. I was like oh, my god, I just saw people standing in the lobby, fire engines, everybody was pulling up still and I saw a bunch of firefighters going in and I am like well, why are they going in. Why would they be going in there you know, it's just not safe. You know, can't they fight the fire from above. When I got there and boom, it started falling and I was like, I know they didn't come out, you know.

Anyway, I start walking around trying to find anybody that looked familiar, because you couldn't tell who was who. Everybody was full of soot and dust. As I'm trying to find the EMS command or whoever I could find, we were saving people, pulling people from rubble and there were private ambulances everywhere. They were the only ones up front. So as we are pulling people out of the rubble or walking past we are just throwing them into ambulances, on the floor of the ambulances, two people on the stretchers, anywhere we could.

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We pulled out this obese man. He had to be like four or five hundred pounds and that's the only thing that saved his life. They pulled a beam off of him. It took 20 firefighters to pull this beam off of this guy. We threw him on the stretcher and we had to carry the stretcher everywhere. Because the debris was so much, you know. It was just horrible.

After several hours of saving people and pulling people from the debris and still walking, every time I tried to leave to find EMS, they needed more help, so I couldn't just leave, you know what I mean. I just kept doing what I was doing.

I guess it was about 4 hours later, maybe about one o'clock, I finally walked back and they told me several blocks back there are some EMS people. Maybe they are your bosses that you are looking for. These are totally different people now. Like I met, of course, several firefighters and -- okay.

I'm a spaz since then too. I hear noise, you know. Holy shit.

Well anyway, I ended up, there were fire engines set up with those spouts of water, little eye wash spouts of water, off the side of the trucks and I'm washing my face and my eyes are burning and I can't

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breathe good and I'm full of soot. Some firefighter blew me off with a compressor so that I could actually see and wash my face.

I finally ran into some academy people. It was Gio.

Q. Pineda?

A. Yes, Pineda. Rolando. Paramedic EMS Rolando. Him and a -- it was all paramedics. There were about 5 of them.

Q. Rolando Gardon?

A. He was the instructor. I don't remember his last name. Well, he was a paramedic instructor.

Q. Big Asian guy?

A. Yes, with glasses. He looks Hawaiian. Yes, so anyway, I ran into them and I told them what happened. They are like okay, just hang out here. Do you need any help. I'm like I just really need to sit down and get some water. They got me water and we were just waiting, I'm like you guys got to go in. You know, there's people in there that need help and you are just standing here and there is private ambulances in there that just can't handle it.

They don't know what to do. There is no supervision. Everybody was killed that was

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supervising, or at least knew what to do. You need to go in there. They are like we can't go in there. They were just standing there. You have to stay right here. What? I'm like what do you mean. Go a couple of blocks in, they need help, they need ambulances. I'm telling you there is people laid out in the street that need to get the hell off and they can't move. Their legs are broken. Their arms are broken. They can't move, they are trapped, they are pinned and these people will be salvageable. Let's go.

Oh, we can't do that. I'm like, okay, so I'm going back. If you don't want to, I will. Just give me some shit, give me some oxygen, and some equipment. I will go back in. I don't care, you know. They were like you can't do that. You have to stay here or you are going to be relieved of duty. I'm like relieved of duty. I just fucking worked 4 hours by my god damn self. If you relieve me now I don't give a shit, you know what I mean. I will go back in on my own. I don't care. I worked without any equipment. I had no equipment on me. No helmet, no nothing. I came from home to come here.

After about an hour and a half of sitting there like assholes, we finally got the word that we



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could go up closer, which is Ground Zero now, and the triage area, I set that triage area up. We had the morgue inside the building. I set all that up the first day. They are still utilizing it today.

It was just wild, you know. It was just wild. All the bodies and people. It was really -- I mean, do I want to add anything. Probably not, but I could chat for days about this shit. It was so disorganized and there was no help, you know. I was there until one o'clock until the morning with not a sign of relief in sight.

I come back here. I finally left on my own. I told them look, I can't stay here any more. I need to leave. I worked 10 to 6 the night before, went home, walked my son, took a shower, came back and worked all day and all night again. It was one o'clock in the morning. I couldn't work any more. You know, I was on the my feet the whole time. My heel is killing me since then. I don't know what happened to my heel, but I finally left and they wouldn't even give me a ride to Beekman Hospital.

I had to walk from Ground Zero to Beekman Hospital to my car and I didn't even know which way to go, where to go, who to see. You know, I'm asking all

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these Captain and Chiefs who are standing there hot shit trying to look cute, how do I get back to Beekman Hospital. Can you get me a gator or anything. I don't care what, a crane, anything. Just bring me to Beekman. I'm exhausted. No, you have to find your way. I'm like okay.

So I walked all the way back to Beekman and I got in my car and I had to dust it off, because there is like a foot of debris on it. I came back here, because I couldn't go home like that. I was so filthy and disgusting, I had to shower before I went home in case I was exposed to something.

I got back here and everybody was sitting here. 50 people in there. I'm like what the hell are you all sitting in there for. Oh, well, we are waiting to go to Ground Zero. I'm like what? What are you waiting for? Well, there is a bus outside, it's empty. A city bus sitting outside empty, waiting to leave with people with their equipment and they are on overtime sitting here watching fucking TV. When I just worked damn near 24 hours straight and I'm so tired and so sick and so exhausted, and there is more people that need help with no relief in there and they are sitting here.

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So I asked the boss, do you know what's going on, why aren't they going. You know, oh, well, we are not allowed to. What? Again, stupidity. What do you mean you are not allowed to. What are they supposed to do there, just sit there and just keep working without relief and they are like, well, that's what we were told.

They are pissed off and they are all asking me what happened and my side and I'm like, you know, I need some food. So Joe Michel went to McDonald's and got me a couple of Big Macs. I put my feet up and I got a massage. I ate a Big Mac and I told everybody how it was there and they were like wow, I think I was the only person that went. Maybe Greenberg went later. I know he wasn't there in the beginning. I didn't see him at all there, and I saw every EMT and EMS person that was there that day. I didn't see him. Where the hell he could have been I don't know, you know.



That was a fucking experience. Fucking. I hope they like my language. It was definitely an experience. So to this day I'm a spaz. I hear noise. I'm like okay, where is it coming from, you know. There was thunder, I will never forget. I was home I

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guess the week after that, and thunder, there was this horrible storm that came through and I'm at home and I'm finally in my bed and I'm like okay, I can't sleep, everybody is knocked out and all of a sudden this big kaboom. I was in my bedroom and I have a ranch, a long ranch. My room is here, my daughter's is here and my son's is here and my son was sleeping with my daughter that night.

I got out of the bed, that boom, ran and scooped the two kids up and jumped on top of them. They are like, ah, what's the matter? I'm like what was that? My husband is like holy shit, you need to see somebody about that. I'm like I'm okay. If they are okay I'm okay. I'm like a spaz, you know. I just scooped them up and I'm laying on them. They are crying, what, what, my daughter is like oh, my son is like oh, I'm like shh shh shh shh. It was horrible.

And I still do that, you know. They are demolishing buildings over by where I live to build a new mall. I'm like, what was that, you know, like commando on the floor. Come on baby, let's go. You know, it's wild.



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Q. Who?

A. I don't even know. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We thought

it was (inaudible).

Q. At work you mean?

A. Yes, at work.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. I don't know. I don't know. It's just weird you know. But I don't really have anything else to say. I guess I'm done.

Q. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. No, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 2210 hours.

File No. 9110174

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT TRINH DINH

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

T. DINH

MR. DUN: Today is October 31, 2001. The time is 705 hours. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department, working with Marisa Abbriano, also with the New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting an interview with?

A. Trinh Dinh.

Q. Battalion 44, and what is your shield and your --

A. My shield is 5423.

Q. Could you please state in your own words what happened on September 11, 2001 of this year?

A. Okay. I start my shift at 8 a.m. in the morning. That day I was working with a different partner, who has been on the job for 11, 12 years. We had our first job somewhere in north Brooklyn.

Q. Who was your partner's name?

A. Ronald Coyne. I don't know if he shows up on your list. We were on our way to the hospital with our patient when his cellphone rang and it was his wife telling him that she saw two planes crash into the World Trade Center on TV.

As soon as we got to the hospital, my partner said he was going to call Brooklyn central to see if

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they needed to send us down to Manhattan. As I just got taken care of the patient as fast as I could so that if we were sent, that we could just leave.

I took care of the patient. He came back and told me that Brooklyn central definitely said yes, to head down to Manhattan. They specifically told us to arrive at Church and Vesey. So my partner was driving. We just -- I believe we took the Brooklyn Manhattan Bridge.

Q. There is a Brooklyn Bridge or Manhattan Bridge.

A. The Brooklyn Bridge. Yes, I believe that's the route we took, but we pretty much got down there in probably less than 10 minutes. On the way up there we saw the two towers in flames. They hadn't collapsed at the time. They were still in flames, the top one third of them. Just a lot of commotion. A lot of cops in the streets directing traffic. I don't think we ever made it to Church and Vesey.

Somehow we made it probably right before the second tower collapse, I see at 9:55, the first tower, excuse me, the first tower, at 9:55, we went up to the West Side Highway to the entrance to the underground of the parking lot. As soon as we pulled up there, we



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just saw this cloud of black smoke coming our way and we just stopped dead in our tracks to where we were. We didn't even just drive any closer. We just stopped and let the black smoke just come over our vehicle. We sat there for maybe like two or three minutes in the blackness.

Q. Was that the first collapse?

A. That was the first collapse. As soon as we pulled up that's when the black cloud just came over us so we just stopped. As it cleared up a little bit, we started to see people like in the white dust. They were just kind of like walking towards the vehicle. At that time, we just kind of walked out of the vehicle and just started telling people to come to the ambulance and just sit there for a little bit, if you needed any oxygen. If you wanted to clean your eyes out and just -- all of a sudden just all these people started coming out. A lot of people.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and mayhem going on through the streets at this time?

A. I wouldn't say mayhem. I think people were mostly walking out. They weren't really running out. They were just walking towards us. They were all covered in white dust.

T. DINH

Q. Did you see a lot of debris when you were pulling up to the site?

A. Yes. That's exactly why we just stopped where we were, because it just came at us so we just stopped. There was a doctor in the back of our vehicle. We picked him up on the way.

Q. Department doctor?

A. No, it wasn't a Fire Department doctor. She was some kind of, I don't remember what kind of doctor she was or who she worked for, but she just flagged us down and asked if she could come with us. So we let her in the back of the ambulance so that while me and my partner got out, she was in the back just kind of helping the patients.

We were telling her where all the -- we stocked everything, all the sterile water, how to use the oxygen. We just told her, you know, give whatever they need and stuff like that. At that time, me and my partner were kind of going back and forth from the vehicle to the building. My partner was actually inside the building, I believe, and I was just kind of going back and forth between him and the vehicle, because every time I went up there, he would always tell me go back to the vehicle, get me more oxygen. Go

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back and get me more of this, get me more of that, more of that. So I was kind of running back and forth.

I guess maybe half hour, 45 minutes must have passed. I went back to find my partner because he hadn't come back to the ambulance for a while. I guess he just wanted to stay inside the building and help there and as I was going to the building to find him, everybody started saying turn around, the second one is going to fall. Of course I wasn't paying attention. I was just like well, where is my partner, I got to find my partner, I got to go, you know, find where he is in the building.

I just kept going, I just kept going and then all of a sudden everyone just started running the other way and I just kept going forward. Then I saw another cloud of black smoke coming my way and that's when I turned around and started running back to my ambulance.

Q. Did the cloud catch you?

A. Oh, yes, the cloud caught me, but then I went in the back of my ambulance and we sat there for a few minutes and it was really thick. This one somehow was just thicker than the first one. This one really made me choke, even in the back of the ambulance.

I was back there taking some oxygen with some

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of the people. I waited a few minutes for it to clear a little bit. Then I walked forward, more towards the building and I just started asking firemen and people, you know, did you see my partner and this and that. You know, nobody was really answering. They were just kind of all in their own little -- you know, doing what they were doing.

Q. Did you ever move your ambulance?

A. I never moved my ambulance from where we were, because when we first got there the black cloud came over us and we just stopped.

Q. That was on West Street, like that underground parking?

A. Uh-huh. So I always wonder, if we had just shown up a minute earlier, we would have just been right up there in the front where the other ambulances were, because when the cloud cleared and I went towards the front, I saw all the ambulances parked like not even a hundred feet, maybe closer than we were and they were all torched and destroyed and nobody was in them and fire trucks destroyed and I was like oh, my god, we were just like not that far back and we could have been this close.

It was perfect timing for us I guess. I just

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kept looking for my partner and in the midst of it, everyone kept saying, you know, can you help this fireman, can you help that fireman. Even though I lost my partner I guess I just continued to help some of the firemen that needed it. You know, I mean, there was this one fireman who had a fractured femur. They kept saying bring your bus over here so you can take him in the hospital. I said okay.

So I went back to get my vehicle and my vehicle was gone. My mistake was leaving the vehicle with the keys in it running. So I guess --

Q. That's not a mistake.

A. I mean at that time, I guess -- I mean when I needed it, I didn't have it.

Q. Yes.

A. But I guess someone else just decided to take it for their use and another EMT probably took it for their use and took off with it. So I didn't have an ambulance for my fireman. At this time I didn't see any other EMTs around. I guess they all just took whoever and left and I was the only one left.

Then all of a sudden this volunteer ambulance came up the ramp and I flagged him down and I asked him if he could take my patient to the hospital with me, so

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we took our fireman to Beekman.

Q. Do you remember the name of the Firefighter?

A. I just remember his first name was Kevin.

That's all I remember. Then somehow, some medics came and they came with us too and we took him to Beekman and as soon as we went to Beekman, I actually ran into a medic that I know who works right here in Brooklyn for St. Marys. I ran into him and I was like, I lost my partner. He said yes, I lost my partner too. He said let's work together. He says I have an ambulance.

So at that point I wanted to call my Battalion to tell them that I lost my partner, that I don't know where he is, that I'm fine, but they said that none of the phone lines were working because, you know, no reception, nobody's cell phones was getting any reception. My cellphone I left in the ambulance, okay. All my equipment was in the ambulance. Everything that I had. That's why I don't have any equipment right now. So I couldn't make any phone calls to the Battalion.

So I just went out with this medic, Roger, he is English actually. So we went out to his bus and we said what do you want to do. I said let's just drive

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around and see where we can help, you know. So we just drove around and just kept driving and I don't know exactly where we ended up, but we ended up right there in the middle of the rubble, where Ground Zero is, where everybody is working at right now.

We just ended up there, there was no other EMTs or medics there at the time.

Q. Was the radio working?

A. Yes. You know, I don't even remember because you just don't even think. You are just like in there in the midst of everything and you are just kind of like continuing to do what you do. So we just stayed in the rubble and we tried to set up a triage there because nobody else was anywhere giving us directions or telling us where to set up triage because nobody else was in the middle of the rubble but us.

So we just left our ambulance there and we just pretty much just watched until some of the firemen decided they needed their eyes washed or they needed oxygen. They would, you know, take turns coming in, going into the rubble, cleaning it out and then coming out and getting their eyes washed and getting oxygen, getting cuts cleaned up, and then eventually as time went on, more EMTs and more medics started coming to

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where we were and then we just started setting triage there.

We just laid everything outside around the ambulances. Everyone was just working from there. Then I saw my partner. This is like three or four hours later. We were so happy to see each other. He got out okay, which is good. Then we all just stayed in that level for a couple of hours, helping pretty much firemen, you know, just pretty much firemen was all that we were really helping.

Q. So nobody tried using the radios to get directions?

A. Well, I know my partner had lost his radio, because I believe he was in the building and whatever happened I'm sure that he lost his radio. My radio, the battery, I believe had died. Because from 8 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that's a lot of hours. Usually you kind of change batteries during the day, but my battery had died eventually and then eventually the cell phones started working, so then I started using other people's cell phones to call home to tell them that I was okay.

But I never called the Battalion because at the time, when everyone started coming to the rubble,



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they had Lieutenants there who set up a triage center and they told everyone to sign in with their unit. So that's what me and my partner did. We went to the Lieutenant, we gave him our name, our shield and bus number.

Q. What unit were you that day?

A. My unit is 38 Eddie. I'm always 38 Eddie. So we were 38 Eddie that day. We signed in so we thought everything was clear. Everything was good, you know. Unfortunately, because I guess of the catastrophe and just all the chaos, somehow they never seemed to tell my Battalion that we had signed in, so by the time I got back at the end of the night, everyone had thought I had been missing all day.

Q. There was a lot of miscommunications.

A. A lot of miscommunication. I mean it upset me, because if I had known it would have been such bad miscommunication, I probably would have thought to call them myself since the cell phones were working.

Q. You did the right thing.

A. Yes, so we stayed at our station doing what we did all day long. After a couple of hours we said let's just take a break. We went over to Beekman Hospital and we just kind of sat outside on the

T. DINH

sidewalk for a little bit. That's when you kind of start like looking back at everything that happened, because when you are in the middle of the rubble, you are kind of just kind of like, you are not even in shock about everything.

You don't know what's going on in the outside of the world. People are coming back with these rumors, like oh, my god, they got the Sears tower in Chicago. Oh, they got the Pentagon. Oh, they got the White House. Everyone is thinking, you know, all these crazy attacks and you really don't know the truth because there is no TV, there is no radios. You are just kind of listening to what people are saying and so you just don't know what else is going on out there.

You are not really shocked at that point. Then like when you step back away from the site, Ground Zero, you just kind of think like oh, my god, did this really happen, like, look at us, we are like covered in white dust. We look like crap, we look like we just went through a war, you know.

Then at that point it was like bad timing. All of these news people and newspaper reporters just kind of came up to us, I guess because we looked the dirtiest, you know, because we were the only ones

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covered in white and they just kind of all just kind of came to us and just all of them just started interviewing us, like what happened, were you there, you know, did anyone live, did you see any of this. Blah blah blah.

So we just gave them a little bit of, yes, this happened, that happened, we were here and we were there. This is what we think about it. You don't really want to say too much. You really haven't collected your thoughts to really give a story or how you really feel. You are just kind of like yes, it was unbelievable. Yes, so a couple of those reporters came and started talking to us.

After a while we went back to the rubble and at this point there were many EMTs and medics in the triage station and pretty much nobody was really doing much, you know. I mean there really wasn't much to do. Like I said, all we were really helping were the firemen and they were little minor injuries, like washing out the eyes and stuff like that, so I mean, there really wasn't much to do, so by the end of the day, say around 9, 10 o'clock, we just looked at each other and said we are tired, there is not much we can do. There is no one here we can really really help.

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So we just decided to head back and my partner and I, my original partner and I, said to the medic that was working with us all day, could you drive us around and help us look for our ambulance. At this point we had no way to get back to Brooklyn.

So we just drove around the hospitals and streets and miraculously we found our ambulance in front of the Staten Island Ferry terminal. I don't know. They had used it for equipment, water, soda, I guess, like, you know, refreshments, just drive back and forth to people and it was destroyed pretty much.

It was covered in white dust. All my equipment was gone and the battery had died, so the bus didn't start anyway. We couldn't get it started so we just asked the medic to drive us halfway to Brooklyn. He lived in Manhattan, borderline Brooklyn and so he drove to us his place and we called our station at that point to say can you get somebody to come pick us up at his house.

They sent, you know, a Lieutenant to come down and pick us up by car. They took us back to Battalion 58. I met my Captain and all the other Lieutenants.

Q. By Woodhull?

T. DINH

A. No, it wasn't the hospital, Woodhull. It was another station here in Brooklyn. It was either 57 or 58 where they were all stationed doing whatever they were doing. It was probably around 11, 11:30 at this point and the Captain and some of my Lieutenants were like, what happened. We thought you were missing, you are on the missing list. We didn't hear from you all day.

The Captain said, but then I saw you on TV so I knew you were alive. I go okay. They made us go to the hospital to get checked out, to Kings County. I had my eyes irrigated for like half an hour. My partner had really bad asthma so he was admitted overnight.

You know, basically that was it. I was just really tired. I just wanted to go home. I don't think I got home until like 2:00 in the morning. It was just a really tiring, really tiring. That was basically all we did all day. The excitement was obviously in the morning, but after that all happened, it really wasn't much more we could do. We just pretty much hung around and did little things.

I mean during the course of the day, we started going to pharmacies and they were giving us

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medication for free, so we kept bringing back eye drops and you know, Excedrins and Advils and burn cremes, and little medications like that that they were giving for free, so we just kept stocking up on it and just kept bringing those back.

Then you had some volunteer, I guess they were just normal pedestrians who were coming back and forth giving us bottled water and whatever, Gatorade or little candies, stuff like that, but by the end of the day, you had trucks of Poland Spring pulling up and all these other foods and, you know, the Coast Guard bringing up food by the water.

At that point at the end of the day, everybody was getting stocked with supplies by each company. So that was nice. That was it. That was just a really long day. Really long day. I mean I just slept all day the next day. All day.

MR. DUN: This ends the interview. The time is 723.

File No. 9110176

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT EMILIO PEREZ

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

E. PEREZ

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 31, 2001.

The time is now 0603 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Emilio Perez, Battalion 14, shield number 3132.

Q. Okay. Mr. Perez is an EMT. We are currently at EMS Battalion 14. This interview is being conducted regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Okay, Emilio, if you begin with when you were assigned to the job?

A. Okay. The morning of September 11 we were at a restaurant called Sunlight located at 149 Street and Walton Avenue. We were ordering breakfast. At about 9:35, about 9. It was 9, about 9:10 when the first tower was struck. We realized it on the television as posted. We noticed that everyone was watching. At 9:10 the plane flew in through the second tower. We were assigned to the assignment from that time on, from 9:10 on.

We responded to the incident via Central Parkway, down Broadway, came across Houston Street, turned left on Greenwich and started approaching the scene. When we approached, we could see the towers in



E. PEREZ

flames. We got closer, we made a right turn on Barclay Street. Parked on West Street off of Barclay at about 9:35.

One of the officers told us to approach the scene, park the vehicle and just set up. My immediate supervisors requested to find out where the triage site was located and I mentioned to him where it was located but he told me to respond to it and I refused to. I set up triage at that area where (inaudible) should be.

We started unloading the equipment to set up for the incident and I think it was about 5 minutes after we set up the equipment, we started approaching to try to assist those injured, we saw the building collapse. Plenty of firefighters reported in. We were following them and as a cloud of soot and smoke started approaching us, we turned around, abandoned the equipment and started running. We ran for our lives, as far as we could. We kept looking back, looking back.

We noticed that the cloud was so thick and deep that we were overcome by it, so we started to turn around, walking back to try to help people, but there was so many people to help, so many firefighters. They

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were full of soot.

Initially in our area was plenty of firefighters and that's all I could see. They all wanted to find out where all the men were. So our initial response there was to treat all of them that were injured, coming towards us. Their eyes were burning, they couldn't breathe. So we were using saline, we were using the little bit of equipment we had. Saline, we were dousing them. We were able to open up the back of the vehicle to try to get more access to equipment, but we were overcome.

We realized that -- I realized there wasn't going to be enough water to help the firefighters for cleaning the soot and debris from them. What I did was I approached one of the fire Lieutenants and started screaming to him, I need a wrench, I need a wrench.

The men were going right back in. So he stopped them and like two of them just dropped. Got me the wrench. I started opening up as many hydrants as I could in that area. I opened up like a good, a good 11 hydrants.

Then I was directing all the firefighters to go on into the areas where I was telling them to go douse down, this and that, but they were concerned for

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the firefighters, so I says to them, listen, all your friends are all over there. All your men are right there by the hydrant. Just go over there. You will find them. Just by me directing them in that direction and being -- using the tone of voice that I did, it helped them because they approached -- but they didn't find the men they were looking for, they were being taken care of.

The FBI was there. The CIA was there. Guys with suits there. They were telling me who they were and I was directing and grabbing them and all I could do was just grab them and direct them to water. So then after I realized that, we just kept helping, kept helping, kept helping, we tried to make another approach to go back to assist those that were underneath the collapse.

So when we tried to make that second approach is when the second tower came at you. The Engine Company that had gone into the right side was just wiped out. As the second one collapsed, we just started to turn around again. It was here we go again, start running. This time we were engulfed with the stuff. People were behind us. We started running as far as we can again. Now we couldn't see much. This

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was like about a good, a few minutes after the first building had collapsed.

There is a whole lot of things were going on, you know, people were running out of there. There was firefighters with police officers and firefighters just trying to set up. Some of them, it just overcome. As these guys got cleaned up and they were ready to walk right back in. They were like let's go. Some were in groups ready to go in and once that second building collapsed, and then people started running, more firefighters were coming out filled with the soot. People were running, so this time we started running so far that the cloud was still following us, you know.

There was a building over there. I think it was the school. I think it was Stuyvesant. They said run inside, run inside. So the clouds kept coming closer, we just kept -- I stopped, my partner stopped, we just kept directing people into the building. I think to Stuyvesant Street, Stuyvesant High School.

So I remember the last person I ran into was an oriental. I told my partner at the time, go ahead, check inside, see how many people in there. He told me there is thousands of people inside the school. I stayed outside. I kept running back trying to help

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more firefighters, I felt like hours -- there was no help for them back there. So I just kept grabbing them and directing them to all the hydrants, kept washing them down, you know.

Then about a good 10 minutes or 15 minutes after the whole incident, my partner came out of the building. I didn't know where he was at. I started going back to the ambulance to see if he had moved it. After the first collapse I went back to move the ambulance to a safer location, brought it back a little further, when I realized that I found him and I tried to make an approach.

Then again, this is like about the fourth time after carrying everything. I grabbed an O2 tank. I told him grab a tank. We put masks, we took the non-rebreather masks that we keep as equipment. I threw an O2 tank on my shoulder. We took the stretcher, full of soot and all that. We was trying to make an approach toward the building.

I was overcome because I knew that alot of firefighters were caught under there. I didn't want to say they were dead because I had hopes for them. I didn't want to just count them out just like that. So we started walking in. There was a fire Captain, he

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stopped us in our tracks, got a few feet going north towards the towers.

He says where are you going with that stretcher? I says we are trying to help. He says you can't help anybody down there. He said don't go in there. He turned us around. That's when we just abandoned everything, you know, hell with it all.

I was so full of soot. I was trying to wash up and everything. Then I had it in me to return back and the ambulance was like -- it was just -- if you could see the amount of debris that was on the ambulance. I'm surprised I drove the vehicle, I just -- that I had it in me to get out of there. Then I get the keys and moved it back a little. As I parked the vehicle after we moved it again. Three or four times we moved the vehicle.

We went to one of the immediate supervisors that worked there, just saying what are we going to do. He says oh, well, just stay there. At that time someone came running out of left field. I don't know who the hell it was. Must have been a police officer. He said there was a gas leak. He said there was a gas leak. Man, there was like about three or four police cars that just took off. One took out a private

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ambulance's door. The other ones just was diving into the car and going.

I find that at this time, you know, there was all -- there was too much chaos going and the only thing I could think of was to board the vehicle, but at all times I was monitoring the radio. We weren't able to transmit at all. The only transmission I made was when I requested additional units, because we had plenty of firefighters that were injured. I think I was the only one that made the call. Might hear it on the tapes, might hear it on the radio, when you listen to 14 David, was the unit.

I requested additional resources, because we had many firefighters that were injured at that site. I was calling from Barclay and West. That was the only transmission I made. We really weren't supposed to make any transmissions, so I made the transmissions and then after that it was all silence. You didn't hear nothing.

Then after this guy comes screaming about gas leak, I jumped on the vehicle, all sooted and everything, we just started driving up Broadway. We drove up Broadway, we stopped. My partner was too -- you know, he was worried, he wanted to contact his

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family. I just continued driving. You could just see the smoke and the soot just flying off the ambulance. I'm surprised it drove. Parked. Here were people trying to take the stuff from the ambulance, can we take stuff from it. They were collecting from it, grabbing cups, you know. We stopped at a store to get some water.

We stopped at a store that was -- some gas station over on Broadway. I walked in to try to get some water. You know, and what really hit me was that, you know, you would think that after the ordeal, somebody would just say here, take the water, go ahead. No, I paid for the water, you know. I don't want to mention of what nationality I purchased this water from. So I continued from there on.

We had heard over the air, they said respond to Chelsea Piers. From there on you would get further info. We drove up there, there was a good hundred ambulances. We were at the tail end. I got out of the vehicle and started walking around. I was in a trance. I was, you know, nobody asked me anything.

People could look at me I guess and say you know I guess I was in hope. I have pictures there of how I looked when I returned here. So then I



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approached -- we were there for hours. The ambulance -- you could see the ambulance. We were still collecting soot from the top of the ambulance while we were parked by Chelsea Piers. People were putting stuff in their pockets and walking away.

I had fellow co-workers that they wanted a piece of the World Trade Center as a remembrance. So I said, to hell with it. We waited, we waited for hours. Then I approached one of the supervisors and he said, it's impossible to be relieved from the scene so (inaudible). They disregarded our request. Within the lines, the front lines they started moving units, so when we approached our turn, I spoke to Lieutenant Nevins. I said can you release us from the scene? No, join the party. Just park over there.

I didn't get that. People make remarks, but for me it wasn't that kind of remark to be made. After what I went through, I didn't want to hear something like that. I wanted to hear you know, man, thank god you made it or something to the fact that what happened, just somebody to listen, say let me tell you my part of the story.

Okay. You can return back to your Borough. I took the ambulance right from Chelsea Piers, drove up

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the West Side Highway with all the soot spraying everywhere. I told my partner, Maximo, you going to do this? Everybody was going, you don't know what's in this stuff.

You know what, if I stayed there, if I did not made the approaches I did, I would have been looking, considered missing. I could have left the vehicle stranded. I could have abandoned everything, but there was something in me that just drove me to come back here. They always say, I remember when I was growing up, you get in trouble, you always run home.

So my first thing was to come right back home. I brought the ambulance back, drove back to here. When I got off here and they said, oh, you was down there. People were very fascinated by the ordeal and knowing that I returned back with the vehicle.

Then I was here for hours, you know. I didn't know how to take my uniform off. I showered here and I had worked overtime that day too. It was an overtime shift, thinking I was going to be in the slowest unit that morning and it just so happened it was that call. Then when I ended up, when the whole situation happened, then I come back and recollect, you know, for a few extra dollars I could have lost my

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life.

You know, when you start analyzing things you see it differently, but in the heat of everything, I never had such an ambulance ride in years, because I work midnight shifts now. Driving down there through Broadway, and hearing all these emergency vehicles, you know, I realized that my skills are there, I mean, but I have to pull them out the pocket. The way I drove down there through cars, through cabs and through people. As you see the people on Broadway, how they were approaching, get out of the way.

You could see something major had happened, because the people in the streets were just like clearing the way, go ahead, you know. Something that no matter how many times you speak about it, it's always something that comes back to mention, because there were so many things that happened in that incident. I can recollect more as I continue to go on.

Driving to the scene I only wish I had a camera, because when I parked right in front of it, I could see the flames and the fire and I realized I was so close. That's when I knew that I had to make a move, being so close, so that's why I made that right

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turn and parked there, Barclay.

You know, when the supervisor -- I'm not insubordinate, but when the supervisor told me -- asked me where was the triage area, I mentioned to him. I says Rector and Vesey. You have to go there. I said no, I can't. I got to set up right here. Look at these firemen. Look at all of them. There is about a good hundred of them.

There is no -- there was somebody standing back there with cameras and things, walking back and forth. There was one guy who followed me throughout the whole incident, snapping pictures, videotaping, back pedaling. Every time I looked he was right there. But, you know, these guys are -- I am so into my job. My job is not law enforcement, so I just look to help whoever is coming over.

So as I was helping the next fireman, this guy was snapping pictures, so I think for every firefighter that I think that I was helping, this guy must have had many photos of me and that's the only thing that I keep recollecting, that if I can only get this guy to get me a copy of this picture to see myself going through this whole deal, because I (inaudible).

I see the photos of the chaplain when he was

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being carried out and it was similar. When I look at that photograph, I did that for a lot of firefighters. I mean I tried to come back with -- my only concern at the time too when the first building collapsed, is when I was really with my partner.

I held him tight, I ran with him and I told him -- he kept looking back, and I told him look, just don't trip. Told him one time, don't trip. I was holding him in the back and as we kept running, I mentioned that statement. Had he tripped I know I was going to leave him. Because there was concern for my life. I was worried about me.

From then on I just -- what I'm going through now is being reborn. I find myself to be more in the gym. I'm working a lot. I'm not normally a work horse, but I tend to try to ignore it totally. This incident with all the anthrax and all that, I don't even want to hear about that. It just started then. After that I returned back the third day.

I knew -- I had hope, but I sensed that there was a lot of dead people. I didn't want to return. After the third day, then I went down there and I returned back to Ground Zero to an area called the hole. I guess my first approach in realizing what they

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were going through, the rescue phase of it.

At the time I could see there was just -- I found out that there was a makeshift morgue and just being there for the first time and pulling out one body, I says, you know, I said I seen enough. At that time we went out on our own, because we was having problems with being used properly down in that area, as EMS employees.

So we went on our own time and realized that -- tried to help as volunteers instead of being on a unit or assigned by staff. They would allow us to go down there and do what? Issue water, set up flashlights. Come on. There were better jobs to do. We tried to go down to rescue. We tried to help. At the time, I was devastated and I told my two partners, you know what, let's turn away from here because there is nothing we can do here. The greatest feeling of helplessness was there. Everything had to be done because they have to do the rescue and all that, but personally when I had that feeling of helplessness, that you can help nobody, the best thing is to retreat.

After that third day I didn't want to return down there. Not even for all the money they wanted to

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pay me. They were giving 15 hour shifts. I didn't want to go back.

Q. After the first collapse, you had your bus still on Barclay and West. Do you remember where you moved it to?

A. I moved it back -- I moved it back to around Murray and West Street. After we moved it from there, that's when the second collapse came. I moved it back some more. After the second collapse we ran. As we were running in the second collapse, that's when I started directing people into Stuyvesant High School. Up West. Up West.

Q. Okay. When you arrived on Barclay Street, you said that an officer told you to park there. Was it an EMS officer, fire officer?

A. No, there was a highway police officer.

Q. Highway?

A. There was a highway police officer. That guy was unbelievable, how he handled that situation in that area. He alone saved a lot of lives, because the way he set that spot up. He was directing people. He told me listen, don't park over there, because I parked there and he said move it back. Give them some space, give them some space so we can get out, so I backed it

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up. We parked it, we parked it across, right on Barclay facing toward the building. I had to back in facing towards the building.

You had to back in facing towards the building because I wanted the back of the vehicle to be open in case we had to treat the people and the equipment was out, so we had the back open. Back side facing towards the tower.

Q. Do you remember when you first got there seeing any EMS officers around that --

A. The only officer that -- I was happy to see him, was Lieutenant Albuermé. He is from Harlem. Then he was like over there, I know him for years on the job, his daughter attended the same school that my daughter attended. Holy Cross. He is the first one I saw.

Q. Okay, who was your partner that day?

A. My partner that day was Delgado.

Q. Do you know your vehicle number?

A. Vehicle number was 138.

Q. Okay. Any other EMS people around that you remember seeing?

A. There was another Lieutenant along with Lieutenant Albuermé there, I just can't recall his



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name, but I have known him for quite sometime, because I have seen him on the job. He was there with me. As a matter of fact, after the first tower collapsed, we thought he was missing, because we could see him when he made the approach towards the initial tower had collapsed. We didn't see him after the clouds came back. I didn't see him thereafter.

Then I think after the second collapse and everything was said and done, now we was trying to help, I guess, we had this instinct where we tried to -- I realize that we tried to find our men and the only thing I could think of was make sure my partner was okay and find out where the Lieutenants were at the time.

Albuerme came back, we were able to -- I found him. The other Lieutenant was with him also, hugged each other and we couldn't believe. Then they started giving me directions on where to set up again. We were just trying to adhere to their demands as best we could.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you would like to add?

A. Well, you know, what I have to say is that I'm very fortunate. Like I said when I got back, I am

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alive, so I must live. I survived through the twin towers collapse, so I'm fortunate. It wasn't my time.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay, thank you. The time is now 0628 hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110177

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FREDDY BURGOS

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

## F. BURGOS

MR. RADENBERG: Today is October 31, 2001.

The time is now 0719 hours.

Q. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York conducting an interview with --

A. Freddy Burgos, emergency medical technician for the Department of Fire.

Q. Of EMS Battalion 14. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 14 and is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Freddy, just begin with when you were assigned to the job?

A. We got assigned to the job. We were responding from the Bronx, down the FDR Highway. As we approached, we see the two burning buildings. Apparently both aircrafts had already crashed into the building.

As we got downtown, we went through traffic to try and find the staging. We finally get to arrive at our staging area and we pull up. To my right I see one of the towers, I believe it's the first one that came down. In front of me on the other side of the street, there is numerous ambulances there.

So I decided I didn't want to put myself right in the middle of it, so I backed my ambulance up to the opposite corner. Just then a rumble was heard,

## F. BURGOS

and then after it goes black and pieces of metal and so forth and so forth started falling on the ambulance.

It goes completely black.

Thereafter, once it cleared up, I told my partner once it clears up we will get out, get the equipment and we will get out of the vehicle, because we were still in the vehicle. We were actually a little too close. That's where we wanted to go. When the first building came down, after the dust lifted from that one, in front of me, the other ambulances, most of them not Fire Department, private or some other ambulances, burning. I witnessed one vehicle crushed. I witnessed a limb inside the vehicle. There was obviously a person must have been dead inside it. The driver of the vehicle I believe it was.

What else do I say. Me and my partner, Karen Lamanna, get out of the vehicle. We put our equipment on the stretcher. We come down walking, or actually running back to any open buildings, where we could go inside with our equipment. People were in there and set up a little triage area. Little bit of that stuff. Not much thereafter, prior to the second building coming down.

Fire Department personnel and PD personnel

## F. BURGOS

running into the building saying it's safe. Other people in there, including ourselves, were evacuated from that building and moved further away from the incident. As everybody was moving away, we are getting everybody. You could see obviously the body parts that were right next to us.

My partner goes one way. I go back to the ambulance to pick up some more O2 tanks and just prior to getting to the bus, I hear the rumble and I drop everything and I run out. As I'm running, I take a look back, see the cloud of dust coming at me and I go into one of the buildings with a little walkway type of deal and ducked in there and see everything come by, it goes completely black. I waited a little bit before I came out. Come out and I'm walking to find Fire Department personnel.

I started walking towards the water. I guess I figured if anything else came down, I'd go in the water. I walked alongside the water, until I wound up at one of the -- West Street or Chambers, I'm not exactly sure where it was. I walked over. I spoke to a Captain. I forget which Captain it was. I think it was Captain Rivera. He was looking at me and I'm all dusty and I'm white and so forth, and he says well,

## F. BURGOS

where is your partner, I said I think she is dead.

He takes me to the MERV, puts me in there and from then on I stood there. Not too long before I walked up to -- caught a ride actually, up to the Chelsea Piers where everything was being stationed at. Before you knew it, that was the whole day. From there we got shipped back here. That was about it.

Q. Okay. When you first got there, were you on the West Side Highway, West Street?

A. I was right along the West Side Highway, parallel.

Q. Somewhere around Liberty?

A. Right.

Q. Okay. When the building came, the first building came down, after you got your stuff out of the bus.

A. My stuff was still in the bus. When the first building came down, we were in the bus when the first building came down.

Q. After that, when you got out of the bus, okay, did you come across West Side Highway, did you head west, do you remember?

A. I think I went down -- these buildings along this side here. We got out of the bus and we came

## F. BURGOS

down, down south into one of the buildings in there.

That's where we set up our staging area. That lasted about 15 minutes, before somebody else came in and said it's not safe. We came back out and I went to my bus real quick to get more O2 tanks and everybody was going south. That's the last I saw of my partner, by the way.

Q. She was heading south?

A. If I remember correctly, she was heading south on the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay.

A. I got caught up, because I went back to get more O2 tanks.

Q. Do you remember any -- when you first got there, any other EMS personnel that you recognized down there, officers?

A. Not officers, I saw a couple of people that were there. I remember I saw Patterson, I forget his first name.

Q. Patterson?

A. One of the workers that was there got hit by something coming down and he hurt his arm. That I remember. Somewhere along the way, there was another EMT, I don't remember who he was. We helped him, he



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helped us with all our shit. I don't know where his bus was. I don't think he did either. That was -- the point we came down, when I came out of that building, after the second tower came down, I was alone here.

By this time, when building number two came down, I was alone. I didn't know where anybody was. I commenced going before the second building came down and jumping into one of these buildings. I remember falling on my face a couple of times. I kept tripping over body parts. Like they were covered by dust, so I couldn't see where I was going.

After that I came out and I started walking towards the water. I kept looking at the water because I kept saying to myself, if something else comes down, I'm going to jump in the water.

Q. You could see the Hudson from where you were on the west side?

A. I knew it was there. It was partially blocked, but I knew it was there. My wife works at World Financial Center. So I knew the water was there. From then on I met up with -- as we were walking along the water, I met -- started to see people, bump into people. A couple I knew, a couple of people. Joey Conzo, that was it. Until I finally got

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to the (inaudible) from.

Q. Once you reached the Hudson, you went north towards Chambers?

A. Started walking up towards Chambers where --- somebody said something about Chambers as far as West Street, or whatever that street was, as far as the first safety area. So that's basically where I kept heading, along the water. Basically kept heading that up that way; rubble, mess, shit like that, body parts everywhere.

Q. Yes, yes.

A. (inaudible).

Q. Do you remember offhand what vehicle you were in, the vehicle number that day?

A. I think it was 448, but I can't be sure.

Q. What was your partner's name?

A. Karen Lamanna. She was ALS. I was working overtime that day. I wasn't even supposed to be working. I was off that day. I came in for overtime and that was my first job.

Q. Okay.

A. (inaudible).

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments?

A. We were too close, we were too fucking

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close. It wasn't just EMS. It was the entire system.

Too close. That's about my only opinion that, too damn close.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay, the time is now 0731.

The interview is concluded. The interview date was October 31, 2001, not as previously stated August 31, 2001.

File No. 9110180

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FAROOQ MUHAMMAD

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

F. MUHAMMAD

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Today's date is November 1st, 2001. The time now is 1035 hours, and this is Monty Feiler of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. My name is Farooq Muhammad. I'm an EMT. Presently I'm on light duty at BHS. I normally work at Battalion 58.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview at the BITS office regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Could you go ahead, beginning with when you first became aware of the incident?

A. Well, I was going about my normal daily routine. I was driving along to work. I was actually driving along Flatbush Avenue, and what I saw was a lot of smoke coming from the direction of lower Manhattan. I didn't know what it was. I just saw that people were actually looking at it. I thought some building was on fire. I didn't know exactly what it was. Eventually, I made it to this parking lot where I sometimes park the car if I do bring my car, and I went inside and

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these two gentlemen are talking and they're saying how terrible it is about what just happened. I go what happened? And they tell me that two planes went into the World Trade Center and I was shocked.

So what I did was I just left my car there and I ran across the street into the Fire Department Headquarters, where I work presently, and I looked at the TV in the waiting room for BHS, and I see that two planes had struck the World Trade Center. I was shocked, dismayed. My first reaction was to get there or to speak to somebody who was going there, see what the deal is. I knew I was on light duty, but I wasn't really concerned about that. I just wanted to get over there.

So what happened was I tried to find Captain Jay Swithers, who was my supervisor, and I found that he had already gone. He wasn't there. So I couldn't ask him and there wasn't anybody really to ask. So what I did was I teamed up with a few other EMS members. They were actually all paramedics. I remember the names of William Tier, a paramedic by the name of Bonnie, another one by the name of Roque Torres, another gentleman, I forget his name offhand. We decided to go together. We just left the building

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and we started looking for an ambulance. We just basically flagged an ambulance and it happened to be a private ambulance. I don't even remember the name. I think it might have been Associate. But we flagged them down, they stopped for us, we jumped on and we went over the Brooklyn Bridge and we ended up in that part of town, lower Manhattan, where the incident occurred. But we weren't right in front of the buildings yet.

What happened was we met up with some other EMS people and we started to decide how we were going to work the situation. There was just pandemonium there. People were running around, people didn't know where to go, people were shocked, people were just frantic. Eventually, an EMS lieutenant said that we should -- I guess they set up triage across from the towers.

Q. Do you know which lieutenant it was?

A. I forget her name offhand.

Q. Okay.

A. It was the first time I ever saw her.

So we said fine and we together -- we decided we weren't going to split up. This was the initial thing, we weren't going to split up, and these are the

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paramedics that I went with. We told each other let's stick together. So together we went in front of the tower and we found that there were other EMS members there that had already set up triage and they were triaging people who had asthma attacks, burns and stuff like that. I saw Captain Jay Swithers there, I saw Manny Delgado, I saw Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck there and -- actually, prior to even going there, I did see Ricardo Quinn. I did run into him and speak to him briefly.

Q. Where did you see him?

A. This is somewhere in that part of lower Manhattan, around there, somewhere around Broadway or something like that, somewhere in that area. I don't know exactly which street it was, but I did speak to him briefly. He had come in, from what I remember, an ambulance with somebody else, and after that I didn't see him again.

Anyway, we ended up in front of the tower and we were triaging people. We were giving them oxygen, giving them nebulizers. We had made a plan. There were ambulances out in front. We decided we were going to start transporting people, this is what we were going to do, and before you knew it, we heard a loud



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noise, you looked up, and the tower was collapsing. So we started to actually run for our lives. The debris caught up with us. We couldn't see, we couldn't breathe. It was just horrible. I was actually suffocating. I thought I was going to pass out and die. I mean, at first I thought something was going to hit me because there was debris that was coming. There was just stuff falling everywhere. I covered myself.

Actually, while I was running, I fell because there were so many people running and I got trampled a little bit, but I got back up and started running again, and then all of a sudden I just couldn't run because I was suffocating so bad, I couldn't breathe, I couldn't see, and all I thought was, oh, no, here I am going to die now because I can't breathe, I can't see anything. So I started screaming a little bit, as much as I could. I decided to see if -- I was like is anybody here, anybody around me? All I heard was keep running, keep running. I heard a voice. So I just kept running.

Eventually I made it to -- well, actually, before the debris came, while the building was still collapsing, I was actually telling people to run because there were people who were frozen, like

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civilians, people that were just frozen. They weren't moving, women. I remember mostly women standing there and not running and I was telling them run, run, run, you know, because they were like frozen. They wouldn't move. I guess I encouraged some of them to run because I made eye contact with some of the people and I started yelling at them to run.

So we started to run, and when I looked back, I actually saw the cloud coming, and so you couldn't outrun the cloud. It was just coming so fast and it was like, oh, no, here it comes, and then whoosh, it just passed us, and this was where it was like darkness and it was like breathing in like thick, thick dirt. That's all it was. It was just like every breath you took, it was like you were just suffocating because it wasn't oxygen, it wasn't air.

But after falling and getting up again and then just having the will to just keep running, that's what I did. I ran and luckily somewhere this door opened up. I didn't even know what it was. I ran inside. It happened to be a store. It was some kind of like fabric store because I saw a lot of like fabric stacked up while I was downstairs in the basement. There was a police officer down there. Somebody from

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the Buildings Department was down there. I actually think I might have his name because later on I took his card. One second.

Yes. His name was Michael Carbone. He was down there, one police officer, another law enforcement officer, I don't remember his name, but he did have a firearm and a shield on, but he was in a suit. What we did, there was some water down there, so we were like clearing our throats. There was like thick stuff coming up. For a good ten minutes all we were doing, we were just coughing and trying to breathe. But a lot of debris was coming downstairs into there also.

But after I regained myself a little bit, I spoke to this gentleman, Mr. Carbone, and the other law enforcement person, and I said I want to get back out there, see if I can help people, and they agreed. They were like let's see what we could do. So the three of us got together and we went back outside, and when we were outside, it was just so thick still, the debris. It was like so thick. We were right close to the tower that in that area the debris was so thick that after running a little bit, we decided to go into this other building that was some kind of like not-for-profit organization. I don't even know the name.

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We go in there and, once again, there we are coughing and trying to get water, and we had some people that were there. We started washing them off, helping them to clean themselves off. There was a woman down there who had broke her leg. We carried her downstairs and put her in a comfortable chair because she was very frantic. She was screaming. We told her to calm down because we didn't want her to excite the other people that were coming in. So we took her downstairs, we propped her leg up, made her comfortable, told her to relax, calmed her down.

Q. Do you know her name?

A. No, I didn't know her name. None of the phones were working. We tried to call our loved ones. I have loved ones in Manhattan who worked on Liberty. I have a loved one who worked on Liberty and Broadway, another brother who was in midtown Manhattan. I couldn't reach anyone. I didn't know if they were okay or not. But luckily, thank God, I found out later on they made it out okay.

So while we were in this place, we were helping people clean themselves off. People were coming in like totally covered. You couldn't even tell what color they were, if they were black or white,

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because they were all covered in this debris.

Everybody was like one color. Then they couldn't breathe. It was in their ears, eyes, and we were cleaning them off, and the stuff was like burning. It was like burning your skin. The stuff was really bad.

What we decide to do then was to get out of this building now and try to go back outside and help people. So what we did was we got these garbage bags and a bunch of these people that ran into the building that we were in gave us a bunch of wet rags -- I mean gave us a bunch rags that we wet. We asked for rags; do you have any rags? They found some rags and they gave us the rags and we soaked them, we put them in garbage bags, and we got a bunch of bottled water and we put those in bags and we were going to go outside.

But right before we were going to go outside, the next big, loud noise comes and here comes another big, thick cloud of debris. So it's like we opened the door and we see the debris coming and now people were running and we were like trying to let as many people in as we can. We're like okay, come on, get in, get in, and before you knew it, we had to shut the door because otherwise the whole place was going to be filled with it. So we shut the door, and at one point,

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you could see through the windows, and when the debris came, it was pitch darkness again. It was like you couldn't see anything outside. You didn't know what was going on with the people.

After that cleared a little bit, we let more people in and we helped clean them off, and then we finally went outside. I grabbed the bottles of water, and Mr. Michael Carbone from the Department of Buildings, he and the other gentleman, they grabbed the rags and we went outside and we started giving rags to people and bottles of water to people, like here. Everybody was like more than willing to take it. They really needed it. People were covered in the stuff, they couldn't breathe, they wanted to clear their throats. So we were giving it out.

I walked one block and then I saw -- I didn't see any EMS people at this time. We were outside. I don't see any EMS people. I see police officers but no EMS people. But then after walking a couple blocks, after like ten minutes, I see Captain Jay Swithers and I was so happy to see him. I ran up to him, I gave him a hug, I'm like I'm glad to see that you're okay because we were like so close to the tower that I was sure that a lot of people got hurt or lost. He told me

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that he was over there, he ducked under a truck somewhere eventually and that he was okay and I was happy to hear that. I told these gentlemen that I'm going to stay with him and they decided to move on.

So me and Captain Swithers, we started to just try to figure out what we're going to do. We started walking around. In the meantime, I was giving everybody water. I had cups also that I took because I knew that eventually the water was going to run low, so I wouldn't give people bottles, I'd put it in cups, and that's what I was doing. When the water was running low, I started putting it in cups, giving it to people. People were running over to us and asking us where do we go? What do we do? All we could tell them was go to the Brooklyn Bridge, go over the bridge and go to Brooklyn, you know, just stay away from that area, just go towards the bridge and try to go to Brooklyn, try to get out of Manhattan. That's all we could tell them. We didn't have any other advice to really give them.

Finally, we kept walking. We made it towards South Street Seaport area and we started walking along that and we were like trying to figure out where to go, and we were both like concerned. We didn't know if the

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next building was going to come down, there was another bomb, you know, it's like one of those tense feelings, it's like a war zone. There was the thick debris, it was like three inches on the ground all over the place. It was like walking in the snow. People were covered in this, people who had no shoes, people's clothes were ripped. It's just a horrible scene.

Anyway, a whole group of police officers were walking by and we asked them, do you know if anything is going on, any kind of like treatment area? They said, well, we hear there's something going on at South Street Seaport, South Street ferry area, Staten Island Ferry. So we walked over there. We kept walking and walking, and when we got there, we saw that they started setting up some type of triage and we helped set that up. There were IV lines and all kinds of equipment set up in the lobby of that area. Just then a whole like large group of firemen arrived from Staten Island and everybody was cheering them and they went about their business.

So I remained there doing triage, but Captain Swithers, he eventually left because he was part of the USAR team, Urban Search and Rescue, so he had to go do that. So I stayed there and I helped treat a lot of



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people who had lacerations, they had sprained ankles and stuff like that, and I helped put them in the stair chair. I helped wrap them up, treat them, put them in the stair chair and wheel them to the ambulances and put them in the ambulances and the ambulances took them. I didn't do any kind of ambulance driving or anything like that. I remained at the South Street ferry.

Q. Do you know who was supervising that area?

A. Chief...

It's on the tip of my tongue. I forget his name offhand.

Q. Were there any other EMS people there that you recognized that you may have come across?

A. Timothy, a gentleman by the name of Timothy, who was at BHS also. That was his first day full duty again. I saw George Gatt, EMT. There were some Metropolitan people there also. I forget their names offhand. Bruce Medjuck was also there at the time. He ended up there. So did Manny Delgado. One of the people in the ambulances for doing transport.

Q. There was a Fire Department car there, too.

A. Idris Bey. I eventually saw Idris Bey.

Q. Who is that?

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A. He's an EMT for the Fire Department.

Q. How do you spell that?

A. B-e-y is the last name. I-d-r-i-s. We sort of gave each other a big hug and everything because he's actually a black Muslim and I happen to be a Muslim and we both like were just shocked at this because why would anybody do this in the name of any religion, you know what I mean? Just a horrible thing that people were actually looking at Islam as the enemy, not just those people who did that. So it was good to see him and actually just talk about it for like a good five minutes, just reminding ourselves that there's no way that we could ever accept anything like this as being Islamic, you know, ever, because we know from the Koran that this is an evil thing and Islam never teaches this.

Also, I had another EMT friend there, Stephen Valladares. Joan Hillgardner was there. Hillgardner. She was there. She's part of the union. She was just doing a lot of good work there, she was doing a lot of triage, she was giving a lot of people emotional support. Just a whole slew of EMS people there. We were treating a lot of firemen. It was just a very emotional thing. Eventually it started catching up

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with you, what's going on. So we did a lot of treating there. A lot of firemen came in with eye injuries and sprains and strains. We had cots and everything set up and we were treating them.

It was hard. We were running out of masks, nobody had any face masks, so everybody just kept breathing that stuff in because nobody had even the disposable type masks. We really needed the heavy-duty ones, but we didn't even have the disposable ones. Ambulances were like completely finished. Nobody had any. It was like people who were part of hospitals eventually would come by and say, look, you need masks? I have a few. It was like that. It was like we had no masks. It was just terrible.

Q. Is there anything else that you want to add before we conclude, anything that you think is important, that you want to reiterate?

A. Well, I'd like to reiterate the fact that, as a Muslim who works for the Fire Department, that I can say that, as far as my family is concerned, as far as my friends who happen to be Muslims are concerned, that this is no way, you know, this no way reflects Islam. Islam does not teach this. Islam is a religion of peace and it teaches brotherhood amongst all people and

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races. Regardless of what religion they are, you're supposed to treat them with respect, just like you would treat your own mother or father with respect. What you would want for yourself, that's how you treat them.

I think not only was this an attack on the United States, but the people who did this also attacked Islam because now here you are with millions of people in the world thinking that Islam is something that's of violence, when really it isn't, when really it's these people who chose it as a means to get their -- whatever they did, you know, to get that done, not to actually portray the true Islam. It's just something that they tried to use to manipulate. That's what a lot of people do, unfortunately, and a lot of people out there who claim to be Muslims do manipulate people into thinking that killing innocent people is good when Islam clearly teaches you that it's something that's not tolerated by God and never will be and it shouldn't be tolerated by any Muslim.

So I'd like to let people know that, hopefully, I just hope that people could realize that. People could just do some research on their own instead of just listening to somebody who says that, oh, no,

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Islam teaches hatred or violence. Hopefully, they could research on their own and find that, no, it's the opposite. It teaches peace and love for all humanity, whether they're Jewish or Christian or Buddha or whatever, rich or poor, men, women or children. It actually teaches respect for the most vulnerable, for the weakest, poorest people. You treat them equal, as you would anyone. There's no like you're better than me or I'm better than you because I'm Muslim. It just doesn't work that way.

It just hurts me that this happened, just like a slap in the face, that's how I see it. For good-hearted Muslims who follow the true message all over the world, I feel this is like a slap in the face, and as an American, I hope that as a nation we could conquer this terrorism, I really do hope that, because my family came here many, many years ago for a better life, to live the American dream. I was born here, raised here. I'm an American citizen. This is my home. I plan on keeping this as my home for as long as I live. I mean, I'm an American. Where am I going to go? This is my home. I truly hope that together Americans can overcome this and that peace could be a part of our daily lives instead of having to worry

F. MUHAMMAD

about getting on the train or traveling or driving in your car worrying about some kind of terrorist attack, or opening your mail, worrying about getting sick.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: Okay. On behalf of the Fire Department, I want to thank you for participating in this. Can I just get the time, please?

A VOICE: 11:00.

LIEUTENANT FEILER: We'll conclude the interview at 11:00 o'clock. Thank you.

File No. 9110181

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PAUL ADAMS

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

P. ADAMS

LIEUTENANT RADENBERG: Today is November 1st, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0647 hours and I'm conducting an interview with...

EMT PAUL ADAMS: Paul Adams, Battalion 49, Shield No. 2212.

LIEUTENANT RADENBERG: We're currently at EMS Battalion 49. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Paul, if you could start with when you were assigned to the job.

A. Yes. That morning we got the job at approximately 9:00 o'clock in the morning from Elmhurst Hospital. We came down Queens Boulevard. We saw one of the towers had been hit, engulfed in smoke. We got across the Midtown Tunnel. We went in the tunnel, came out. We came down Second Avenue south, got over to Broadway. We got to the site at 9:15 at Church and Vesey Street, where we parked the vehicle. We walked down to Fulton and Church where they had a triage set up in front of the Millenium Hotel. At that time the second plane had just hit, just prior to our arrival.

We were asked if we had our triage tags by our Captain. At this time I just turned around.



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People were walking out of the buildings. We grabbed one patient who we found out later had 70 percent burns on her body, second and third degree burns. We took her, a couple other people, and shot out of there, went up -- I can't remember the street we went up, but I ended up going to -- it was the wrong way facing Broadway in front of St. Vincent's. Me and my partner, we got her out with some other people.

Then we went back in, back to the site, back to the same area, the triage, and about five minutes later, we looked up, we were screaming, I looked up, I see one of the buildings coming down. I ran about 30 feet. I found out later on I went up against -- I tripped over a fire hose. I lost sight of my partner, Mous Diaz. I got up and went up against what I found out now is the Millenium Hotel's parking lot garage gate. It was closed. It had like a foot overhang.

I was with this FBI agent and I put my helmet over my face and just stood against the gate and took a quick look and here comes the debris from all the building. It lasted for about ten minutes. I couldn't breathe. My lungs were filling up with this stuff. I don't know what it was. I thought I was going to die, either the building debris was going to hit me or the

P. ADAMS

building I was under was going to collapse or my lungs were going to collapse. I was hyperventilating. I just thought to myself I've got to slow my breathing down. I did that and that's the only thing that saved me.

About close to ten minutes later, the dust starts dissipating. I grabbed the FBI agent and I started another vehicle that was like 20 feet away. I put him in it. I said I'll be back in a minute, went around, got six, seven, eight other people, put them in the truck, and then I went back to the site looking for my partner, Mous. I looked around for a couple minutes. I didn't hear nothing, no reaction. So I shot out of there. I had the windshield wipers on for about four, five blocks. It was still cloudy out, dust.

I dropped these patients off at St. Vincent's and then went back in. In the process of going back in, No. 2 came down, and by the time I got, there they had already completely, totally -- you know, it was collapsed. I just went back in, got like another six, seven, eight people out. I had them in the front seat of the vehicle. I had one guy riding on the hood of the truck. I got them to St. Vincent's, dumped them

P. ADAMS

out there. I know it's a shitty word to use, but that's just what it was, just get them in and get them out. I didn't take no names or nothing, except for the original, first one, the burn patient. There was just no time to be filling out paperwork or anything else.

I went back in again afterwards, looking for my partner, looking for Carlos Lillo, and he's gone now. I found my partner about four, five hours later, and I went over to where they had another triage area on West Side Highway and I believe it was Vesey, by the pedestrian bridge. I was checked out in the ambulance over there and I was fine, came back out, and about five hours later I went to Mount Sinai Hospital, where they kept me for like four hours, did tests. I had bruises on my knees, my shoulder was hurt, killing me, constant cough, and that's it.

Q. When you first got there, you parked your vehicle up on --

A. Vesey.

Q. On Church and Vesey?

A. Yes.

Q. It was at that point, roughly, that the second tower got hit, right as you pulled up initially?

A. Which are you talking about; the first one?

P. ADAMS

Q. Yes. When you first got to the scene.

A. The second tower got hit, I learned, I believe, as we were under the Midtown Tunnel.

Q. Oh, okay. All right.

A. It was about 9:11 or something, 9:12, the second one, the second plane hit?

Q. Okay. When you got over here into Church and Vesey and Fulton, any other EMS units over there?

A. Yes. We had the medics. They followed us. I forgot to mention that. They followed us from Elmhurst Hospital. We got the jobs together and we both went.

Q. 49 Victor?

A. 49 Victor, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Carlos Lillo, who's now gone. We both followed each other in all the way through from Elmhurst right into downtown. When we got off at Vesey and Church, we parked the vehicles right there. As far as other vehicles at the time? I think there was like a private ambulance company there, numerous fire trucks. I really didn't see any other people.

Q. Any EMS officers around that you recognized in the area?

P. ADAMS

A. Yes. There was a Captain over there. There was Bruce Medjuck. He was there. He's a nice guy, good people.

Q. Do you remember the Captain's name?

A. [REDACTED]

Q. Okay.

A. Her first words out of her mouth were where's your triage tags? Where's your triage tags? There were people walking around with their green tags on and I just looked at her and I said are you kidding me? I said these people should be just getting out of here. Get out of the site. The buildings didn't come down yet, but it was still debris and everything else coming down in the area from the plane and fuel. So we just grabbed our first patient.

Q. The burn patient?

A. The burn patient, right. That was the first one that we grabbed with her friend that walked down the 83, 84 flights. I feel they're going to find a lot of people with triage tags on with greens on them that because of so-called people following protocol that was basically made for, I think, just like a regular plane crash somewhere in a field, somewhere in the ocean.

P. ADAMS

But I don't know. Like I said, you're going to find a lot of people dead with green triage tags around their neck.

Q. After you got the burn patient to St. Vincent's, do you remember what route you came back to the scene on?

A. Yes. Broadway.

Q. You came down Broadway?

A. Shot down Broadway, yes, down regular Broadway.

Q. Do you remember where you came west back into the site?

A. Yes. I'm not sure exactly. I did some fenagling to get -- you know, I like went up one block and down another just to get back to the same site again.

Q. Back to Fulton and Church?

A. Yes.

Q. That's when the first building came down?

A. Yes.

Q. Right as you got back down there?

A. About five minutes later, when we started treating some other people. There was one person that sounded like she was having an MI because she had

P. ADAMS

walked -- it was an elderly woman. She had walked down 80 some flights also. We had just put her on the stretcher, actually, and that's when people looked up and started screaming and we looked up and that's when the first one came down. We pulled the stretcher as far as we could with her on it, you know, get her out of the way. Then we found out later, though, that she was all right. She got up out of the stretcher also. She seen God, I guess, seen the light.

Q. So after the first collapse, you took another load of patients up to St. Vincent's?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you come back the same way, down Broadway again?

A. The same way again, yes. I was stopped by a Chief. I forgot to mention that, too. But he asked me to -- this is the third time I'm going in. The second one I just came down. He asked me to pull over to the side. He was setting up triage. It was like five blocks away. He had three ambulances at the side. I said how many patients you got? He goes one. So I kind of cursed him out, and I said what, are you nuts, and I just drove right back in.

Q. Do you remember where on Broadway that was?

P. ADAMS

A. No. I have no idea.

Q. Do you remember who the Chief was?

A. Some young guy. I'm not sure.

Q. When you got over to West and Vesey, any idea what time that was? That was after the second --

A. Yes. That was about an hour after that because I was looking around for my partners.

Q. About an hour after the second tower came down?

A. Yes. Then I was just physically exhausted and I had problems seeing, coughing, my knees were killing me.

Q. Okay. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. No. I've pretty much said everything. Thank you.

LIEUTENANT RADENBERG: Thank you. The time is now 0659 hours and the interview is concluded.



File No. 9110183

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT ORLANDO MARTINEZ

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

O. MARTINEZ

MR. DUN: Today is November 1, 2001. The time is 740 hours. My name is Richard Dun from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Working with?

A. Fabiola Quevedo from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting an interview with?

A. EMT Orlando Martinez, Battalion 4.

Q. Shield?

A. 2815 shield number.

Q. In your own words, can you describe the events leading up to the events of September 11, 2001?

A. Early morning, about 8:40, I was parked down at Church and Barclay, regular normal routine, getting our breakfast. While inside the deli a few minutes later, there was a large explosion. We went outside, the building shook we were in, looked up and we saw the top half of the World Trade Center on fire.

My partner ran to the vehicle with me and as we were running he called over the air for an explosion at the World Trade Center. I'm not sure if it was the first transmission, but it was 30 seconds afterwards. We were a block away.

Q. What was your unit designation?

O. MARTINEZ

A. Unit 01 Adam.

Q. Tour 2?

A. Yes, that's our regular unit. We got in the vehicle. We drove one block to Church and Vesey in front of World Trade Center 5, in between 5 and 4, right on the corner. We opened the doors up. As soon as we opened the doors up we got overwhelmed by patients just coming over to us for help. People were bleeding, tripping, minor injuries, some major, we had some second degree burns run up to us initially.

We continued to call for back up. About 4 or 5 minutes later, we finally got the first back up; that was the medics.

Q. When you first pulled up was there a lot of debris on the ground, what was the scene like?

A. No, no debris. Not where we were at. We were parked on Church and Vesey. Later on there was a lot of debris, but most of the debris was, I think inside the courtyard of the World Trade Center, not so much on Church and Vesey, not yet anyway.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and panic at the time?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. People were running --

O. MARTINEZ

A. Well, they were running towards us, asking us for help, asking us for help, asking us where to go. A police officer came up to us in plain clothes and told patients in the ambulance -- we were packing the ambulance, we couldn't kick anybody out. Usually we have a triage outside sitting on the sidewalk. We just couldn't stop everybody. He told people in the ambulance it was a plane accident. It's not a terrorist attack. Once he said that, a few minutes later the second plane hit.

After that everybody -- they didn't believe him any more. Some people jumped out of the ambulance, some stood inside. Once the second plane hit, the shrapnel from either the plane or the building started hitting the top of the bus and the area around us. Anybody who was near the ambulance ran inside the ambulance and ducked for cover.

We closed the doors. People inside the ambulance were screaming. We were trying to calm them down, telling them to relax, including my partner.

Q. What was his name?

A. EMT Frank Puma.

He was calm though. For the most part. We did our best. About a minute later I told Frank we

O. MARTINEZ

have to get out of here. It's not safe to be on this corner. So I jumped out of the back, went to the drivers seat and put the vehicle in reverse and went forward down Vesey Street towards Beekman Hospital.

We had a second degree burn patient with respiratory problems, so we needed to get him out of there. For our safety and to just transport at least, the busload of patients.

Q. At this time, both buildings were still standing?

A. Oh, yes. Once we started taking off, I guess 30 feet in front of us, there was a lady on the ground by the curb and she was just waving her arms. That's all she could wave. Her legs were crushed. Apparently she got hit by part of the landing gear, one of the tires of the airplane. There was a large tire next to her.

The person who was next to her, I guess worked with her, said something hit her. It may have been the landing gear. It was a large piece of metal that was so sharp it slit her whole back open, buttocks. Her legs were exposed, bones. I told Frank, jump out of the back of the bus, get the stretcher. So we took the second degree burn patient out of the

O. MARTINEZ

stretcher, threw him on the bench. We placed him on the bench. We took the stretcher out, took the long board.

Q. In your words.

A. Yes. We boarded her as fast as we could. There was nowhere to grab her. She was too slippery, so I grabbed the hip bone. That was exposed. We just kind of picked her up, put her on the long board and we strapped her up, put her on the stretcher and took as much flesh as we could. It was just hanging all over the place, put it between her legs. Put her in the ambulance and rushed her to Beekman.

From there we dropped off the first seven or eight patients. Came out the ER after we dropped everybody off. Actually we dropped the first patient off, the lady with the -- that got hit with the landing gear. When we got back to the ambulance a minute later, it was empty, so I guess the doctors outside took everybody out of the ambulance. I don't know what happened.

Went back to the ambulance, there were purses, wallets, people's personal belongings in the back of the ambulance. I grabbed everything I could, go into the ER, dropped it off, told the nurses here's

O. MARTINEZ

everybody's belongings. I guess they sorted it out.

We cleaned as much as we could, whatever we could on the long board, not the long board, the stretcher. So we just wiped it down. No sheet. Went back over there. Went back to -- we tried to go back to Church and Vesey, we knew there were a lot of people there, but we saw most of the ambulances going up, I believe it was Barclay Street toward West, there was a new staging area.

Dispatch said to go to the staging area, so we rediverted to the staging area.

Q. Buildings are still standing?

A. Still standing, yes. Very swift, still within half an hour, we had to be out there. We started going towards the staging area. We got flagged down by Hatzolahs. They had critical patients by the Church, so we rediverted one block and we treated a few more people injured there. Hatzolah had three busses, so we let them take care of them. They transported and we went back to the staging area.

We never made it there the first time. We attempted the second time. We got there. We parked on Vesey and North End, with all the other ambulances. Once we parked there, they told us stay by the bus and

O. MARTINEZ

wait for further instructions. We stayed by the bus and waited, and I realized that we had almost nothing left in the ambulance. We depleted most of our resources.

I told Frank stay with the bus. I have to go to the LSU, Allan Cruz. It was half a block away. I said I will be back, don't worry. He goes all right. I went over to the LSU, got some water and some more supplies, restocked the ambulance. After I got all the supplies I started walking back towards the ambulance and dispatch on the radio goes everybody run north, the building is leaning. So I started running towards the bus. I didn't see him. I said maybe he left already.

So I ran this way towards Stuyvesant High School on the right. I went up Vesey, I made a right towards Stuyvesant High School. My partner Frank went to the left towards the water. He's a good swimmer. I'm not.

They said some people jumped into the water. I'm not sure they did. Anyway, I ran to the right. He ran to the left. After that I didn't see him for two hours after that, maybe an hour and a half. I presumed he didn't make it out of there. He presumed I didn't make it out of there.



O. MARTINEZ

Q. This is the first building collapsing?

A. Right. There was an explosion and after we started running, I was able to make it to Chambers and West, where I only saw one EMT, EMT Vega. She is new here. She was the only EMT I saw from the station and with all the cops and everybody else running, rescue workers. I grabbed her and I said just stay with me. We will try to get out of here.

So we made it to Chambers and West, which is about 4 blocks from Vesey. We stopped, looked up, waited a few seconds for further instructions. The new staging area was Chambers and West Street at that time. We waited there I guess about 10, 15 minutes. That's when we heard the building collapse. That's when they told us to run again.

We ran again, up north, as fast as we could. We made it to the -- I made it to the St. Vincent's garage, I think it's on Vestry. I ran two marathons in New York. When you got to run, you run.

Q. (inaudible).

A. Yes, it is. We made it up there. Waited for further instructions. Nobody knew what was going on, nobody knew where to go. They told everybody stay out of the World Trade Center area. Don't go back in.

O. MARTINEZ

It's not safe. So I was looking for my partner about an hour and a half. I still couldn't find him. I presumed he was missing. He presumed I was missing. An hour and a half later an ambulance comes full of soot. It's all covered in white and he is in the driver's seat.

Q. Was that your vehicle?

A. My vehicle, my partner made it out. I don't know how he did it, but he did. He was able to get out. He had one EMT on the right-hand side on the passenger side of the ambulance, D'Angelis. He was off, he just came out of his shift, midnight, and I guess jumped in the truck and he came down to help.

Q. Who was that?

A. Actually he came down in his personal vehicle to the World Trade Center. D'Angelis. I forgot his first name. He came in his personal vehicle. He drove to the World Trade Center, parked it by the World Trade and started helping out and he met Frank Puma there. They both jumped in the vehicle and they drove up West Street. I met Frank by the St. Vincent's garage.

After that we stood there for about, I guess another half hour, 40 minutes. Time is a little flaky, man. I can't really remember too much. Everything

O. MARTINEZ

seemed like it went so fast. I guess half an hour. We all convened, we all got together. We met everybody we could and then started calling the station. Every time we saw somebody, we would call the station and we started making our list of who saw who.

Half an hour later they told everybody the building's leaning again. Everybody run north. Everybody got in their vehicles. My vehicle was packed with EMTs and paramedics in the back. Like a can of tuna in there. We jumped in the vehicle and we just gunned it to Chelsea Piers, the new staging area. That was the third one we went to.

Q. You are talking about the second building collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. The first building hit?

A. Right, the first building, it was already collapsed and after I guess the second building, they told us to start running again. That's when we took the ambulance to Chelsea Piers. I'm almost positive. I'm not sure. So we are at Chelsea Piers. We parked there, just waited for further instructions. We parked the vehicle facing south, so I made a U turn. Parked by the pier facing south. Went to the nearest officer

O. MARTINEZ

who was there. The highest rank was a Lieutenant; no chiefs, no captains.

Q. Who was that?

A. May have been. It was a Lieutenant, I think Miller. I'm not sure that's his name. I don't know if you know him. Went up to him, saying we are 01 Adam, we are here. He goes okay. So we just stood by the bus and we just waited. We just walked up and down a little bit, staying as close to the bus as we could and started looking for our members, anybody we knew. That's what everybody was doing, just looking for somebody they knew.

There were too many Maydays already. We couldn't get through on the radio. People -- Mayday, help, trapped, can't get out.

Q. But the radios were working?

A. The radios were working. It was just very hard to transmit.

Q. Anything else? Any other people that you saw down by the site, like officers, Chiefs, things like that?

A. Chiefs. I saw Apuzzo, Captain Apuzzo. He finally came with a van full of people.

Q. Was that during the collapse or after the

O. MARTINEZ

collapse?

A. That was at -- Chelsea Piers? I believe it was at Chelsea Piers. It may have been after the collapse. It was probably. That's about it. Most of the tour 2 I guess we saw there. Some tour one came over that worked the night before and were still lingering around came over. Tour 3 came a little bit earlier. They showed up.

That's about it. As far as names and who I saw, there was a lot of people. I can't remember everybody. That's basically it.

MR. DUN: At this time the interview is finished. It's 755 hours.

File No. 9110184

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT GREGG BRADY

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. BRADY

MR. DUN: Today's date is November 1, 2001.

The time is 10:20 a.m. I am Richard Dun in the New York City Fire Department working with.

Q. Fabiola?

A. Quevedo, of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. We are conducting an interview with --

A. Gregg Brady Battalion 4, EMT D.

Q. Gregg, in your own words and description please describe the events of September 11, 2001 this year.

A. Okay. I reported to work normally as I do, reported in at 8 a.m. At the time of the first crash, I was sitting in our office speaking with the ALS coordinator of Division 1, Esther Coarse, when we heard a loud bang, we both thought it was a sanitation truck, either dropped something or they crashed. Never thinking it was a plane.

At that time, we heard a lot of talking on the radio and I got a call from Captain Mark Stone saying to load up vehicle 849, a Suburban, and be waiting for him downstairs. As he arrived, we proceeded down to the north tower of World Trade Center. As we were proceeding through the Battery Park

G. BRADY

tunnel, as we came out, we saw the second plane hit the south tower. At that time, traffic was very dense and it was very hard to get through.

Q. Was it dense because there was debris on the ground yet?

A. Yes, there was a lot of debris on the ground. There was a lot of people looking up, watching, a lot of people not knowing what to do.

Q. Was it chaotic or anything like that?

A. Yes. Very chaotic, people, they were evacuating busses and stuff like that. I managed to make my way through and I parked vehicle 849 across the street -- across from the south tower on the West Side Highway. At that time, me and Captain Stone met up with Chief Gombo, and Chief Gombo and Captain Stone proceeded on talking on what courses of action that we should take.

After meeting -- after their meeting, Captain Stone proceeded to ask me to instruct 3 units to follow us into the north tower's lobby and set up a triage area. At the time, as we were going through, it was very chaotic. A lot of jumpers. Had a body laying about 20 feet to my right.

Q. Were the radios working at that time?



G. BRADY

A. At that time radios were working, cell phones we were having a lot of trouble with. We proceeded through a broken window that the Fire Department broke to lead access into the south tower. We proceeded to set up a triage area. At that time plans changed and we transferred the triage area over to 7 World Trade Center, in the lobby.

From that time, I proceeded with Captain Stone back into the south tower to meet up with Chief Gombo again. Chief Gombo proceeded outside, so we went outside and I found myself standing underneath the south tower.

Exact place, I believe, was across the street near a toll booth. I remember a toll booth. At that time, as they were speaking we heard a loud rumble and we look up and we saw that the south tower was coming down. We all turned around to go run and all we saw was a building. I pretty much thought I was dead. I didn't see anywhere else to run. Although we saw a bunch of firemen running into an underground parking garage, so seeing that, I followed them into the underground parking garage and huddled against the wall waiting for the debris to come in.

Q. Was Captain Stone in --

G. BRADY

A. Yes, Captain Stone proceeded in. At that time, we lost each other. After all the debris stopped from coming in, I turned around and I couldn't even see my hand in front of my face. I had no clue where I was, I was breathing a lot of dust and concrete dust. It and was all globbing up in my mouth and I tried to spit it out and a bunch of firefighters turned on flashlights and started yelling come towards the light.

We found an exit, the way out. We found an exit, the way out. We came out a side exit. Came out through a stairwell, a side exit of a stairwell on the bottom floor. Came around and proceeded around to the front of the second building. Actually --

Q. The first tower?

A. The first tower. We were standing right over here.

Q. The parking lot and the driveway is over here.

A. There is an underground parking lot somewhere over here, right?

Q. Right here.

A. Okay. So we ran over here.

Q. You came out in the Financial Center?

G. BRADY

A. Yes, we ran underneath 2 World Financial Center and we came out in front. I don't know how we came out. There must have been a side exit out. When we came out in front it was just as dark as it was out there. You know, we came outside and I thought -- I didn't even know we were outside it was just as dark as it was inside.

From there, at that time I still lost Captain Stone, I hadn't seen him. I met up with Chief Carrasquillo. I met up with him outside. I know him from being Chief Ianarelli's aide. I met up with him. We proceeded to 3 World Financial Center, the American Express building and we -- they set up a plan of action. They set up a triage area in that lobby.

Plans changed again. I met up with -- I saw Captain Stone in that lobby. They moved the triage area to -- I'm not sure what the building is called.

Q. North End Avenue?

A. North End Avenue and Vesey Street, there is a building right on the corner. At that time we proceeded into the middle of West Street directly underneath the north tower. At that time, I had a very tight feeling in my stomach, just experiencing what I went through with 2 World Trade Center, being that

G. BRADY

close. I didn't feel at ease at all.

We were standing underneath and Captain Stone was speaking again. We heard -- I heard 3 loud explosions. I look up and the north tower is coming down now, 1 World Trade Center.

Q. Did you see any fire Chiefs or anybody like that?

A. I saw two fire Chiefs. I don't recall their names. I saw two fire Chiefs, Chief Basile, Captain Stone and I don't recall who else was over there. We were standing in a circle in the middle of West Street. They were talking about what was going on.

At that time, when I heard the 3 loud explosions, I started running west on Vesey Street towards the water. At that time, I couldn't run fast enough. The debris caught up with me, knocked my helmet off. I tumbled and then eventually I started running again. I made it behind a building on North End Avenue. I set up a triage area in that corner building and at that time I started treating patients.

I was standing around and I saw a whole bunch of patients coming in. I started treating -- I do remember treating a 3 star Chief from the Fire Department. He was on a backboard and we put oxygen on

G. BRADY

him, we are bringing in equipment. They were setting up ambulances outside to get them out. Was treating regular pedestrians, regular civilians.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos at that time?

A. A lot of chaos. Inside the building was Chief Gombo, Chief Pascale, Chief Basile, Captain Stone and a Lieutenant that I'm not sure -- I don't recall his name, from EMS. They were talking over a strategy of what else was going to happen, what they should do. At that time I left and I started treating patients again.

After that, I left with Captain Stone to the West Side -- we left to go to the West Side Highway. I'm not exactly sure why or --

Q. Did you happen to go north or south?

A. We went north on the West Side Highway, after they talked about what strategy. We started walking towards Chelsea Piers, because they set up a triage area up there. From what I remember, Captain Stone was injured during the second tower coming down, and we met up with Chief Randy Hirth and Lieutenant Grace Cacciola, and Captain Stone was transported to Bellevue for an x-ray on his shoulder. After he was released, we returned to Battalion 8 for about 20 minutes and we

G. BRADY

proceeded back down to Ground Zero.

After that, we were -- I'm not sure. I believe we went up to Chelsea Piers and we started --

Q. With Chief Hirth?

A. With Chief Hirth, Grace Cacciola and Captain Mark Stone.

Q. So Mark came back?

A. Yes, Mark came back.

Q. You all went back to Chelsea Piers and that's where you stayed the rest of the tour or the remainder?

A. We stayed up there for maybe I would say maybe half an hour, 40 minutes, then we proceeded back down to West and Chambers where they set up the command post for EMS, where Captain Stone met up with Chief Basile again, Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Pascale and Chief McCracken. They started laying out the plan for --

Q. Long term operations?

A. Yes. For long term operations and from there I met up with Chief Steffens. At that time I was acting as his aide because Chief Ianarelli is out on medical at this moment. We were instructed to head up to Chelsea Piers and Chief Steffens was to take command of Chelsea Piers. At that time, I acted as his aide,

G. BRADY

recovering information as well.

Q. Okay. So that's --

A. That's basically my experience.

MR. DUN: Okay. This concludes the  
interview. The time is 1030 hours.

File No. 9110186

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MALA HARRILAL

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



M. HARRILAL

MR. CASTORINA: Today is November 2, 2001.

I'm Ron Castorina from the New York City Fire Department. We are here at Battalion 31 conducting an interview.

Q. With me is?

A. Richard Dun from the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Your name, ma'am?

A. Mala Harrilal, Battalion 31.

Q. What is your rank?

A. EMT-D.

Q. The time now is 0540 hours.

On September 11, 2001, on that particular day, could you tell me the events that took place that you remember?

A. Yes, about minutes to nine o'clock I heard on the radio, a unit was saying that a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center and both me and my partner drove down by the water in Red Hook. That's my assigned area and you could see -- we saw the smoke. There was a second plane circling the building and I kept saying why is he so near the building? Within minutes, before even talking about it, he just like slammed into the second building.

M. HARRILAL

We got on the radio, called the dispatcher. She said fine, we were assigned to the job. Took the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We were stuck in the tunnel for a couple of minutes and as we got out of the tunnel on the West Side Highway, there were cars crumpled and crushed all over. There were body parts on the street. I saw something that looked like a helmet, but it wasn't a helmet. It was a head.

We made the left, right on to Liberty Street, where we saw the other units. Within minutes there were like Chiefs. I saw Chief Grant, Chief McCracken, and they were all setting up the staging area where they told us, the command center in fact, where they told to us move the busses and park. Stood there looking at the building burning, saw within 5 minutes, I thought that like 16 people jumping off the building.

Q. Who were you with, who was your partner?

A. Frank Pastor. At one point I couldn't take it again, because I would keep yelling can we go help them, can we go help them. But he is like you can't, because the scene wasn't safe. So there was nothing we could do.

Q. How far back from you from the scene, where were you from the building? Were you like a block

M. HARRILAL

away?

A. Like two blocks away, two blocks away, where we were parked, so I can't even tell you where exactly. We were a little by Liberty State Park, to the side. I saw a couple of the crew members that I knew on 31 David and some medics from Woodhull. I told my partner, I said if you need me I will be standing right by my ambulance.

As I turn around and I'm coming back, all I heard was don't turn back, just run. I look up, saw the building coming towards you. Keep running, I couldn't see anything, I couldn't breathe. I couldn't see anything, just that jet sound. Everybody was like pulling people inside stores. I just like -- while running, stopped to help this EMT from Jersey, I think, she fell down and broke her arm in like 3 places. Picked her up like three times and kept running.

Somebody pulled me into a store, pulled us both into a store, some of those Hatzolah guys. Got into the store and just keep yelling, where is the back, where is the back door, where is the back door. There was no back door. We look around, all you could see was alcohol. It was a liquor store. At that point in time, the debris got lighter.

M. HARRILAL

Chief McCracken ended up coming in and yelled get out of here, this is not a good place to stay. So at that point, I was just getting out --

Q. Who were you with in the store, you and your partner or --

A. No, my partner and I were split up.

Q. You were with some civilians?

A. Yes, mostly Hatzolah guys and civilians.

They gave us water. It was just to wash your eyes and keep running again. We ran so far, I mean my last resort was jumping into the water. At that point in time I think that's when we saw Chief Grant, Chief McCracken and I ended up with my partner. People were just yelling, please help us.

Q. How many injuries were you seeing, the ones that were running?

A. Mostly they couldn't breathe and their eyes. The Hatzolah guys were running out with medics from Maimonides, medics from New York Cornell that were injured. They had them on long boards and stretchers and they were just running with them. So when the people started screaming, Chief Grant got -- Chief Grant and Chief McCracken, they both got on the radio and asked for boats. Within 5 minutes boats were

M. HARRILAL

there. Circle Line, New York Waterways, even tug boats were there.

At that point in time, we couldn't do anything but help the people get on to the boats. So we first started with the kids, then the parents, then, you know, basically got everybody off that area. I guess at that time it was just like us alone there, us and the cops. There were a lot of under cover cops, a lot of detectives, and we kind of basically got out of that area, because at one point they were talking the building that we were standing by was burning, was -- fumes, gas fumes.

So we got out there and that's where we met everybody else from -- all the guys from the academy, all the other Lieutenants. They brought back our ambulances. Then we drove down -- further down near the Battery Tunnel, I guess, to meet everybody else.

Q. This was the first collapse, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Then what happened, then the second collapse came, you weren't there for the second collapse?

A. No, no, it was the first collapse and by 2:00 we were dismissed from there. Because we had -- when we got back our ambulance, there was no equipment in

M. HARRILAL

the ambulances. My ambulance was blown off, the windows were blown out. Even my cellphone was gone. We had nothing. We were totally wiped, covered.

Q. Initially when you were there and the first building came down and you ran and all these events took place, then somewhere in that time frame like an hour later, the second building --

A. The second building came down.

Q. But you weren't involved with that part, because you were already out of the area, you were by the boat loading people?

A. Right, because we heard the explosion. We wasn't there.

Q. Right.

A. It was just like -- I think the second building, I could be wrong, but the second building that fell crumbled. It's the first building that fell. It actually came down, so -- I really didn't witness the second building at all.

By 2:00 we were dismissed from the scene and went to the Battalion.

Q. Were you injured in anyway or your breathing --

A. I have asthma. For the first week I was

M. HARRILAL

fine, the second week I started coughing. By the end of the second week I started wheezing.

Q. How were your eyes?

A. At first my glasses were messed up, I had to go get new lenses and I have been taking the pump ever since.

Q. How is your partner, your partner made it out of there okay?

A. Yes. He is fine.

Q. Anything else you can think of that you want to add?

A. No, I felt -- I mean what was bothering me the most is that that's what we are there to do, to help people and at that point in time, there was no way of helping anybody, but to help yourself, to run for your life, and that's all I kept saying and praying, Lord help me, I'm not ready to die yet. I'm glad my partner is safe.

I saw Chief McCracken and Chief Grant. They were okay. I don't know. I'm glad to be alive. So it felt good, me going back Tuesday, because I wanted to go back ever since, but there was really no time to go and then at one point when I figured -- you know, thinking about the smell of the place and everything, I

M. HARRILAL

might have a hard time with it.

So I finally went back on Tuesday and it was fine. At least I knew I was there for 14 hours, 12 hours, 12 to 14 hours, to help people who needed to be helped.

Q. Right, the other day?

A. Yes, last week. So I felt much better.

MR. CASTORINO: Okay. This concludes the interview. The time now is 0550 hours. Thank you.



File No. 9110187

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC EDGARD SUAREZ

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: Today is November 2nd, 2001. The time now is 0625 hours. I'm Ron Castorina, New York City Fire Department, at Battalion 31 conducting an interview. With me is --

MR. DUN: Richard Dun, New York City Fire Department.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, sir?

PARAMEDIC SUAREZ: Edgard Suarez.

MR. CASTORINA: What is your rank and title?

PARAMEDIC SUAREZ: Paramedic.

MR. CASTORINA: Paramedic? Where are you assigned to?

PARAMEDIC SUAREZ: Battalion 31.

Q. On September 11th, 2001, what were you assigned to that day?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. What unit were you assigned to?

A. I was working 31 Victor Tour 2.

Q. Can you tell me on that day the events that took place that you remember?

A. I stayed for a double tour, and about 8:30 or 8:35 we were assigned to the World Trade

Center. When we got there --

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I was working with Paramedic

Cherrington, Andre Cherrington.

Q. Andre Cherrington?

A. Yes.

We crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, and we arrived at Broadway between Fulton and Cortlandt Street. We were sitting right in front of the Millennium Hotel.

Q. At that point the first plane had hit?

A. That was right after the first plane had hit.

Q. After the first plane had hit?

A. Yeah. We hadn't seen the second building on fire.

We were triaging in that area. There were many people requesting ALS, so we were triaging people, people having chest pains.

Q. This was in front of the Millennium Hotel?

A. Right in front of the Millennium Hotel.

People were coming to us with lacerations, bleeding all over. We were trying

to do our best. There was two firefighters brought this guy with about 85 to 90 percent burns, major burns, first degree and third degree burns. So we started taking care of this guy. We started an IV on him.

There was a female lieutenant that wanted us to stay to take more patient with us. This guy was in such severe respiratory distress.

Q. You had him on your ambulance? You were getting ready to transport him?

A. Yeah, he was on board. He was ready to transport. So we decided to start moving. We were about one block away when the first building collapsed. People were running toward us, banging the ambulance, "Open the ambulance." We just couldn't do it.

Q. Were you able to get out of there and take the patient?

A. Yeah, we got out of there. We were pretty lucky.

Q. What hospital did you go to?

A. We went to New York Cornell Burn Center.

Q. Then when you were done with the

patient, did you return back to the scene?

A. Yeah, we went back. We were assigned to the West Side Highway where they had --

Q. At that point when you went back, had the second building collapsed or first building collapsed?

A. Yeah, the second building.

Q. Both buildings were collapsed already?

A. Yeah, we were listening to the news when the second building collapsed.

Q. You went back there to triage?

A. Yeah, actually we were sitting on the West Side Highway when we hear that there was like a gas leak. There was so much panic, everybody running. We were a couple feet away from the ambulance. So we actually left the ambulance behind. When we came back after everything settled down, I guess it was.

Q. In was what, the second time when you came back, you're talking about, the gas leak?

A. Yes.

Q. You were down by where?

A. That was the West Side Highway.

Q. And where; do you remember?

A. West Side and about Murray Street.

Q. Murray Street and the West Side  
Highway?

A. Yes.

Q. There was a triage area there that was  
set up?

A. Yeah. Actually there was like a  
staging area. There was many ambulance, many PD  
cars. We were there waiting for hopefully going  
to help somebody. When the news came that it was  
a gas leak, everybody started running.

Q. Everybody left their vehicles and left?

A. Yes, we actually left our vehicle  
behind. When we came back for it, it was gone.

Q. What happened?

A. We just couldn't find it. Somebody  
took it away or -- I don't know.

Then we went to --

Q. You had left the keys in the ambulance  
because of the staging area?

A. Yes. I have the extra key, and the  
other key was in the ignition. My partner was  
driving, so he left his key.

Q. Was the vehicle ever found later on?

A. Yes, the vehicle showed up.

Q. Somebody must have just pulled it out of the area?

A. Yes. We saw it later that day like seven, eight hours after. They had it at the morgue moving bodies.

That's about it.

Q. Okay. Anything you want to add?

A. No.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 0627 hours. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110188

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LAURA SIEBUHR

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 2nd, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York, conducting an interview with --

EMT SIEBUHR: Laura J. Siebuhr, EMT 5478, Battalion 45.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 45 regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Laura, if you would begin with when you first became aware of the incident.

A. Okay. My partner and I were actually getting coffee first thing in the morning. We were within our 89, which is our cross street location. We noticed there was fire in the distance. From where we sit in our 89, we have a whole view of the skyline, and obviously it's fairly close.

So my partner said exactly, "Holy shit, Laura, that's the Trade Center on fire." I told him to shut up, no way. He said, "Well, let's take a closer look to get away from all the trees and everything." So we drove up closer. My

partner Patrick said, "Oh, my God, Laura, that is the Trade Center on fire," and I agreed.

He called central and said, "This is 45 David. Central, did you know that the Trade Center was on fire?" Everything was completely silent, I would say for maybe a good 15, 20 seconds. Everything was just completely silent. There was nothing on the air, which was highly irregular, because there's always activity going on over the air.

I remember the silence. I don't remember who was dispatching at the time, but they started dispatching units out, and 45 David was one of them, which was my unit. They told us to transfer over to citywide and report to I believe the 59th Street Bridge. We were very close at that point. We were told to continue to I believe West and Vesey or Church and Vesey. I'm not clear. I have no really working knowledge of Manhattan.

We did as we were told. As we were getting closer, you could see that it was just a horrific sight. Going over that bridge I'll never forget. It was bad. Actually I didn't

really know too much when I went in to work,  
being that I had never been to an MCI before.

We saw other ambulances on the opposite side of the bridge trying to get through, but for some reason we were flying and we were bypassing everybody. I don't know why, I don't remember how, because this was so much traffic. For some reason we just had a straight way.

People were just getting out of our way so quickly that we got there I believe within less than eight minutes from where we were, which should have taken us a lot longer than that. I guess because at the location where we were trying to see, we were pretty close, even to the bridge.

We got there, and there was a lot of people running out of the building. I didn't see any other ambulance units there other than Hazollah. I didn't even know where any Manhattan units were. I guess the thing had just hit, so within that span. Everybody was within traffic. Everybody was trying to get in there all at once.

My partner and I got out. Being the other unit was there, Hazollah was there, we were

making a make-fast triage underneath the second tower, the next tower over. I get them confused, tower one, tower two. I don't know, just everything happened so fast.

As people were coming out of the first tower that was hit, we were bringing them over and we were triaging them. Those people were pretty bad. We were basically sectioning them off and tagging them who goes where, the most critical and the least critical.

We would section them off, and we were putting them on buses, not ambulances but regular city buses, so they could transport them out because there wasn't enough units there. We couldn't leave because there was too many people. People were very, very bad, very bad.

I was so geared to working on the patients and trying to focus -- you didn't have time to think. You did not have time to think about anything. People were hurt so badly. I remember just hearing a very low hum, I guess because I was focused on what I was doing with the patients.

But I do remember hearing a very low

hum in the background, which people will probably tell you different, but this is what I heard; and then just a massive explosion, and that was loud, because I was standing right underneath it when the second plane had hit.

My partner ran and grabbed me by my arm and started yelling at me to run. So he was actually holding onto me and making me run quicker. Still I didn't know what was happening. I didn't know it was a plane. I just thought it was an explosion from the other tower. I didn't know a plane had hit. So I'm pretty much oblivious on what's really going on at this point because everything is happening so fast.

We ran and we got maybe less than a quarter of a block, less than half a block, maybe. I don't really remember. But I remember we were still right there. Within minutes later, over the radio or somebody had said, "Oh, my God, the Pentagon got hit and this is war, we're at war." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. You couldn't breathe because when the second plane hit, all that debris, it was like cement. It just filled up your throat, it filled up your lungs, you could not breathe. You were actually spitting out huge particles. It was like it manifested itself in your mouth because it was so small and it filled up. You couldn't breathe. It was just caked in your throat.

My partner says, "All right. Listen, stay with this unit." My unit was directly in front. He said, "Stay with the unit, and I'm going to go back." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Maybe within -- I don't know really time frame. I don't know time frame. But there was a command or somebody had said the units had to start moving. It wasn't that long after. I was sitting in the back of one of the units, and I don't remember what unit it was.

I said, you know what, I'm not going to go with these units. I've got to go back. I've

got to find my partner and make sure that he's okay. I didn't really feel threatened at this point. Some time had passed, not much but some, to where I was able to gain some composure about myself and I wanted to find my partner. I needed to find him. It was very important that I had him and I knew where he was.

So I started walking back. The next thing that I know, I was just about there, and a firefighter, which I really wish I knew who it was. I have no idea who this person was, but a firefighter started running and he said -- this is another one he actually grabbed my arm. He said, "Oh, my God, Honey, run."

I looked up, and it looked like the tower was leaning. I was almost underneath it, so it actually looked like it was leaning. So you didn't know which way to run. You just saw a lot of firefighters and police and EMS and all of the major people that were down there to try and rectify the situation before it got any worse started running, and I didn't know why. Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think that this was going to come down.

So he grabbed my arm and he said, "Honey, run," and he started running with me. I said, "Oh, my God, are we going to die?" He said, "I don't know. Just keep running." Then the loud rumble, and then that thing, that monster, just started coming down.

They teach you in the academy about the feeling of impending doom a patient might feel. I have never had that feeling up until that day. I knew that this was it. I knew that this is how I'm going out. The only thing that ran through my mind was -- other than saying the "Our Father" as I was running, "God, please don't let this hurt." I thought it was going to hurt. Just "God, make it quick."

I was running, and the fireman had let my arm go. He had gone one way and I kept running. I remember there was a building on my left-hand side, and I don't remember what building it was. I remember not being able to run very fast because of fear, and my radio and my helmet was weighing me down. So I threw off my helmet. I threw my radio, which was found, by the way. It was unbelievable.



I just remember I couldn't run, the fear was -- you could not run. You're just stricken. I just remember just heat. I felt the heat and the smoke just eat me up. But right before it did, this building to my left, I remember approaching it, wanting to say, well, I've got to get some kind of cover. I got sucked in by that huge cloud. Not sucked in but I guess --

Q. Enveloped?

A. Yeah. Then I really couldn't breathe and panic and disorientation.

I came up to the building, and the doors, they slid open from side to side. They were electric. That I remember because I couldn't find the handle, and I'm banging on the door. I couldn't breathe. You just could not breathe. Whatever you did, there was nothing to do to get away from it. You just could not breathe.

I was banging on the door, and somebody had -- a girl or a woman had got the doors open for me, and I just kind of fell in. All I wanted to do was just breathe, get my lungs -- you know,

I couldn't catch air.

Then I got into this building, and I paced and paced and paced, and that's all I did was pace. I was so worried about my partner. I was crying a lot. I wanted -- I needed to find him, because I didn't know anybody. I didn't have anybody with me. I was alone, except some of the people in the building. I didn't know if we were going to get hit again. It was bad. It was really, really bad.

During that time in the building, I didn't know that the second one had gone down. I had no idea the other building -- I didn't know. About a half an hour later I was looking outside. It got to the point where you could actually see your hand in front of your face. Things started lifting.

The only thing that I had on me was my phone, so all I'm trying to do is call my family and tell them get in your car and go east, because I didn't know. I just wanted them to get out of harm's way, you know.

Then I wanted to go outside, and some of the people said, "My God, don't go out there."

I still needed to find my partner. I was very adamant about it, and arrogant I was, because I was panicking and just "Don't touch me. Just leave me alone. Just let me think." I didn't have my radio on me. I had no radio contact, and I was freaking.

Some old woman gave me a wet scarf to put around my face, and I went out, which I thought was very sweet. I went out and I started again heading back to the Trade Center. I wasn't far. I mean, I was just not even up the block. It was not even a block, that I can remember.

I can't even recall what building it was; I can't. I don't know which one it was. I had gone there repeatedly and tried to find this building I was in when I do the Trade Center and do my overtime there, because I've been back there twice a week every week. I do the overtime and stuff. And I can't remember.

I started making my way back to the Trade Center. When I got there I saw a lot of people. I didn't hear anybody talking. The only thing I heard was those loud tones. That's all I heard was those tones. I guess it was the

firemen looking for their own. That's all I heard was those tones and me looking for my partner, calling, "Patrick."

A fireman came over to me and said, "Make your way back to the peers, or start going to the peers. Just get out of here." I was at the corner, so I wasn't like -- there was so much stuff everywhere, so much. It looked like Armageddon. Everything was just gone [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We started making our way back to the piers. I still didn't know anybody. They were all unfamiliar faces.

About an hour and a half, two hours later, I see my captain, and there went my professionalism [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Finally after about an hour and a half, almost two hours that I can remember, in a fireman's jacket and an SCBA on his back and a hood, I thought I saw him. This person came closer, and there went my professionalism again, and I knew he was alive. And cling, held on tight to him. I was so relieved that he was alive.

Even now I get emotional because to lose him, I would be losing such a big part of my life, because since I got on this job and came to this battalion, he has taught me everything that I need to know. He also saved my life by putting me in somewhat of a safe spot to where if I wasn't at the ambulance and him pulling me and running with me after the second plane hit and putting me in a safe place, I probably would have

been gone and would have followed him because he went into the building.

I probably would not be here if it weren't for him, and I hold a lot of respect for him and I love him for it, because he let me go home to my daughter, which a lot of people didn't.

Q. Right.

A. We started making it to the piers. The calvary was there. Everyone was there. And I got to go home that night.

That's all I can remember.

Q. What's your partner's last name?

A. Richiusa.

Q. When you first got down there to the Trade Center, do you remember seeing, aside -- you said the Hazollah ambulance. Any other kind of EMS personnel?

A. Yes. You know what it was? There was a lot of people there. I remember nurses being there. I remember doctors being there. I remember people saying that they were nurses and doctors. I remember people saying that they were EMTs and paramedics that were off-duty. I

remember a lot of ununiformed people were there, a lot.

Forgive me, and I could be wrong but the only other ambulance that I saw at that moment was Hazollah. I could be wrong, but that's what I remember.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember pulling up and thinking -- I remember actually thinking, my God, we came from Queens and although we made it here so fast, where the hell are the Manhattan units? Where are they? I remember seeing fire trucks, a lot of them, but I don't remember seeing FDNY ambulances. I don't remember. I could be wrong, but that's what I remember.

I remember thinking to myself where are they, and I just remember seeing Hazollah. And how I remember that -- I don't even know if I'm pronouncing it right, but I just remember seeing the curls on the side of their heads. I think they're Hasidic.

Q. Yeah.

A. I'm not clear on it. They were awfully nice. They were so nice. And we did work

together. I believe it was four of them and Patrick and I. I remember directing the people that would come out of the first tower that was hit. They were so bad.

I mean, people did not -- people were coming out and didn't have any hair on their bodies and on their heads and on their faces. I remember facial hair was so singed off and badly burned and them saying that they were several floors underneath. I don't really know how it works when a plane hits. I know nothing about it.

But I remember a lot of screaming, and I remember people falling out of the buildings or jumping. I remember seeing it. I remember just a lot of smoke, a lot of crying, a lot of people going into shock, a lot of talk about elevators inside the building.

I just remember people talking about elevators, that they weren't working or that it fell -- it felt like it fell several floors and hit a specific floor hard and people were complaining about back pain and skin hanging from their bodies and being in a lot of pain. A lot



of pain. Everybody was just -- there was a lot of pain. It was very heartbreaking.

Me only coming out of the academy nine months, ten months. I knew nothing except just keep bandaging them up, keep oxygen on them, and put them on where they need to go. Next. It was fast and furious. You didn't have time to think.

That's all I really can remember, and just feeling very badly and very scared. I never in my wildest dreams ever think those buildings would come down, never, never. When I saw my partner, he was badly hurt. He got stitched up on the scene, with a leatherman tool, no less, his own tool.

A doctor, he said he's never done it with a tool, but I think he got 13, 15 stitches, some on his back, some on his shoulder. He didn't have the correct tool to do it with. Pat whipped out his tool and he said, "Well, you can use this." He actually started sewing him up without anything, just a needle and thread, and showed him up with his leatherman. And he blew out his knee, which I believe he had to get surgery for.

And that's all I can really remember, and just being extremely happy that I was going home to my little girl and able to tell my family that I was alive, because my mom knew that I was down there and my sister actually in Colorado knew I was there and saw it on TV and knew I was there. So they knew that I was gone. They actually thought I was gone. I was just happy to be home.

That's the best of my recollection moment to moment. I mean, it's also two months later.

Also actually what I do remember, one thing that I neglected to say, that on the way there, there were two priests that were begging to stop us. They were saying, "Please take us with you. There are so many people down there that need their last rites." So I said, "Get in," and we took them.

Whether that's against the rules or not, I don't know. But you know what? There were people down there that needed it. And whether they made it out of there alive, I don't know. I hope they did. But I thought that was

the right thing to do. My partner and I both agreed on it.

I basically threw these old men in there. I threw them in, "Get in," not even thinking of any kind of repercussions of anything, because I didn't know what we were going into. I just knew that it was a huge MCI. I didn't know that it was a plane at that point. I just knew that it was big and that there were more than likely hundreds of casualties because of what it looked like, not knowing what caused it.

We picked them up and we brought them in, because I knew that there were going to be people that perished in whatever happened. And we did, we picked them up and we brought them over there.

Q. What's your 89 location?

A. My 89 is -- oh, God, Metropolitan and Forest, which gives you a complete view of the whole skyline.

Q. Right.

A. You're not far at all. It's like an arm's length away. You're looking and you're

like, wow, you can see the whole entire skyline.

That's basically all I can remember  
that day, that disgusting day.

Q. Any other thoughts or comments you'd  
like to add?

A. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

With that said, I'm done.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0658,  
and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110189

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN HOWARD SICKLES

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 2nd, 2001. The time is now 0526. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York, conducting an interview with.

CAPTAIN SICKLES: Captain Howard Sickles, commanding officer of EMS, Battalion 45.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 45 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Captain.

A. On that morning I was assigned to the battalion because I didn't have a command vehicle. I was running the ambulance station as I normally do. A call went out, and I see notification that there was a plane into the building at the World Trade Center.

I went outside. The TV was on, and I saw the devastation from the first plane hitting the tower that was broadcasted on CNN.

I sent messages to Howie Hahn Lieutenant Hahn -- he was on patrol -- to pick me up, and we started out to the Trade Center. I called the tour commander to let him know that we

were going and did he want us to go to what location, because they were staging ambulances around the city. He advised me to go directly into the site.

On arrival we staged at Church and West, and I walked down to the command post, which was in the first floor or the lobby level of the north tower of the World Trade Center. Chief Gombo was there with Ross Terranova, and I believe Chief Kowalczyk was at that point also there.

Things were a little confusing. They were trying to put an operation together. The windows of the north tower on the ground floor were blown out, were broken. I don't know if they were blown out, but they were most certainly broken. There was a lot of glass. That was actually how I entered; I walked through one of the windowpanes, or where there would have been a window, into the building and started going through the doors.

I saw there was really no command post set up. It was a little haphazard. Commissioner Feehan was in the lobby. I asked him if there

were any spare command boards around. He told me there should be outside. Any chief car that pulls up should have one.

I went outside. I believe it was the Division 6 car was just arriving. I told him I need his command board and I had Commissioner Feehan's permission. I got the command board from him.

Actually as I exited the building, I thought somebody hit me from the back, tapped me on my back. I turned around and didn't see anything. Somebody pointed to my feet. I looked, and there was a body on the floor. So apparently he's what brushed against me, hitting me in the back, because it wasn't there, it was behind me. I had just walked there. So I knew that body fell. So I'm pretty lucky I wasn't hit then.

I walked over to the chief's car. I got the command board. I walked back into the building, and Chief Kowalczyk said, "Let's go." And I took 49 Henry with me so we would have an ambulance crew there with us. Chief Kowalczyk said, "Come on, let's go. We're all out of here."



We're going across the street."

We went across the street and we set up in what would be, I'm assuming, is Three World Financial Center. We were in the garage -- we were in the throat of the driveway. We put up the command board. We started drawing the towers, putting this all together, and we decided -- I told him, we need to put this all onto one frequency because citywide's too congested and we need to have a point-to-point frequency and a dispatcher to come to.

I went inside. I spoke to Chief Diggs on the telephone. I told him what our needs were. He was a little argumentative. He didn't want to do it because of the high call volume in Manhattan south. I said, "You can give us any frequency. Manhattan south was just a suggestion."

He put me on hold. I said, "I'm not waiting here all day." I left. I sent an EMT back inside to call Chief Diggs and to wait. We were at command post operations. We started to set things up.

We sent Chief Brown to the south side

to the south tower to see what was going on there, to give us a reported. He took a package which included Captain Deshore and a couple of ambulances, and some of them were volunteers.

Ambulance crews were showing up at the command post. Maimonides Medical Center showed up with an ambulance with a transfer truck of their's with a couple of paramedics on it and a supervisor. We sent them back to go north, and they ended up not taking the direction. I saw the ambulance later on and it was crushed but there was nobody in it. So that worked out well but they didn't listen and they didn't take direction.

We were at the command post. We had assigned Lieutenant Medjuck along with Captain Olszewski was on West and I believe around Church Street, there on West and Vesey, at first West and Barclay, in that neighborhood. I don't remember exactly where they were, but they were in that neighborhood, on that side of the operation.

Chief Brown was to the south. We had nobody on Trinity or Church that I was aware of.

He actually may have been around Vesey and Trinity -- Vesey and Church. I don't remember the exact location; I just know he was on the north side of the operation with Captain Olszewski. We were trying to divide it up and get everybody assets in order that they can handle. Chief Goldfarb was down at staging.

We heard a rumbling. We thought it was another plane. We looked up, and you actually saw the towers just starting to roll down at you. You saw the building portions coming down. I stood there and couldn't move. I just couldn't move. I couldn't believe what I was looking at.

A couple seconds later I turned around and started to go. You just saw a sea of humanity. Before that we were at the command post. Chief Nigro and Chief Ganci were behind me, and they just couldn't believe the human devastation of watching people jumping out of the upper floors. They were hitting the ground and because of the force of hitting the ground, they would break open and blood was splattering and body parts and you could see them hitting the ground and bouncing and parts bouncing up.

They were just like, "Oh, my God, oh, my --" and they couldn't believe the devastation; nobody could. Everyone was sort of standing there in a little bit of awe, trying to get this under way and just watching people jumping for their life.

To go back to where I was before, everybody went through the building. Lieutenant Moore was in front of me. The building had a grating for water run off as it goes down so it doesn't go into the garage. He apparently tripped on that grating and fell. I was right behind him. I fell over Roger, and we tumbled maybe some 20 feet into this garage. We really didn't get anywhere.

Q. That was in Three Financial Center?

A. I believe that was Three Financial Center. That's where we were, just across the street. I'm not sure if it was three or two, because we were directly across from the tower. I'm not sure which one is directly across. It might have been Two World Financial Center. It was directly across. It may have been two. It's hard to tell from this map.

Q. Right.

A. I don't remember whether it was the American Express building or two. But looking at it more closely, it's probably Two World Financial Center, right across the street, because we weren't very close to the pedestrian bridge. So I would tell you it was probably Two World Financial Center. I have to change that. I believe the garage was Two World Financial Center.

Q. Okay.

A. So we were directly across the street. Everybody ran into the building. And Roger and I fell over each other. We made it like maybe 20 feet into the building.

You just heard a rumbling and you heard things, and it got very black. You couldn't see anything, nothing. There was no light. I couldn't move my legs. I couldn't move myself. I really thought at one point I was dead. I couldn't see my hand. I couldn't think of anything. I was in no pain. I just really thought I was dead.

It was dark. You couldn't hear

anything. There was no sounds. There was nothing. There was no sound in the background. There was nothing, no noise. Beforehand there was noise because there were fire alarms going off -- not fire alarms, the pass alarms from the SCBAs. They were going off early, because I had said at the command post can we shut those stupid things off. They were going off early. I'm sure they were going off when we were running down the hill.

After the first collapse, it was dark, it was black, it was just deadly silent. I really thought I was dead. I started talking to myself, and then Roger Moore, in a couple of seconds, moans and tells me to "Shut up. You're not dead."

So I still couldn't move, and I was telling him, "I can't move. I can't move." He's telling me he can't move. A couple of firemen came by, and I don't know who they are -- I didn't know who they were. They lifted off what looked like to be a desk later on, because they showed us with a light. They had hand lights with them, and it looked like to be the top of a

desk. They lifted that off of us and they moved some other debris, and I was able to get up.

Then they helped Roger out. They told me just get out of the building, and I went back up towards West Street. I didn't go into the building. I told them they were coming to West Street, and they went into the building further. They figured they would come out on what would be North Road or -- I think it's North End, the back end of the building. They figured they would come out on North End and it would be safer.

I went out straight. I got out of the building, and you couldn't walk. There was so much dirt, dust and debris, it looked like it was snowing out. It was still falling, the ash. It was snowing. I couldn't believe what I saw. What was once a command post where there were 50 people standing, there was nothing, there was nobody. It was quiet. The area was dead. There was no noise, no noise, nobody around, nothing. You couldn't hear anything.

There was a communications van from the Fire Department, an old Chevy van, a low top, not one of the big rescue looking communications

vehicles, and it was just dead. There was no noise coming out of it, nothing. Everything inside was gray. Everything was covered. There was just nothing. There was no noise. There was no noise on the EMS radio. There was nothing. It was just dead silence.

I got my wits about myself, and I tried to remember where everybody was. And then I was trying to call people on the radio and there was no response.

A few minutes later Chief Ganci came walking up the street and he told me to go north. I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going south" I told him to go north, and he just continued south. He said, "Just go north."

I stood there for a couple more minutes. I had to sort of get my wits about me. I started calling people on the radio. I got Bobby Brown on the radio, Chief Brown on the radio, and he was telling me that he's okay, he's not injured badly. The building collapsed around him. They're trying to figure out where they were. I told him to go south.

I got a hold of Bruce Medjuck, and he



said he was okay. I couldn't get anybody else.

Goldfarb came up on the radio and asked what was going on. I said to him, "There's nobody at the command post. It's just me. I don't know where anybody is or whether anybody survived," because I didn't know what went on inside the basement of that garage.

I got onto Manhattan south, because we already had the frequency. I told him we had a major collapse and they need to start sending more units; send south through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel and send north units from the bridge and they really shouldn't go past Chambers until they get here. I told them twice, twice, because the devastation is just unbelievable.

Before I got anywhere, I was walking up West Street. I just wanted to get out of there at that certain point. I was walking towards Goldfarb at Chambers. Before I could even get far, the second building came down. I know when I walked up West Street just a little bit, maybe just past what would have been Vesey, I really didn't get that much further. The second building came down, and I was pushed. I actually

flew like 40 feet.

I was covered in debris a second time -- oh, no, before that happened I saw one of my EMTs, Pat Richiusa. I saw him on the street, and he told me his partner was missing. I said, "Go west. Just go north and let's get out of here and we'll find her. We'll find where everybody is." And he disappeared.

Then I went up West Street. The second collapse happened. I was knocked down. I was covered in debris again. Again, dark, very scared. Again, no flashlight with me whatsoever. I waited. I just sat there. I got up after the debris, and I started going north. I went north. I got up a couple of blocks, maybe just past Vesey, and I went towards the water.

I saw Chief Carrasquillo there, and we went into the Renaissance Hotel. We set up a treatment area. Chief Gombo was in there, Chief Carrasquillo. Chief Pascale was wheezing away. Chief Kowalczyk I believe was there. We were just trying to put things together.

I even yelled at Chief Gombo because nobody was listening. I knew Bobby Brown was

injured. I knew where he was, and we couldn't find him. I knew where Bruce Medjuck was prior to the collapses, and we couldn't find him. Nobody could tell me that they found them.

We were operating in there. Chief Cassano was there. We had to put him on a back board. We sent him off to the hospital because we had neck and back pain. We must have sent about six or eight people to the hospital from that point.

Then we had to evacuate because they said there was a major gas leak in the area. We went to the water side. We went up to river end. We walked up to River Terrace up here somewhere, probably closer to Chambers. There's a nursing home over here or a senior residence. We went to use that. We couldn't use it logistically.

We went into the school. They started operating in Stuyvesant High School, so it was around Chambers. I guess it was closer to Warren than Chambers, the nursing home, north terrace or River Terrace, and we had to leave there. Actually I think it was North End, because then we went to River Terrace, and we had to leave

there.

Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Pascale, they just went north. They went as far as the piers, and that's how we ended up taking the piers for the operation.

I went up to Chambers, and from Chambers and West, Chief Peruggia was there. I ended up in the command post with Chief Peruggia, Chief Cruthers, and I forget the other Citywide Tour Commander. Butler, Chief Butler. I worked in the command post with them.

It was eerie because they looked like they got mad at me. When they were talking about what assets they would need because they were going to go into an OEM meeting at Police Academy -- they were sending another chief down there to go and let them know what our concerns were.

They were talking about rescue tools and rescue operations and DMAT teams. I said with a very straight face, "You need to order DMORT also. What's DMORT? Disaster mortuary response team." They looked at me like I had two heads.

I turned and I looked behind me, and I said, "You really need this DMORT team here. It's going to be more than we can handle." It took a couple of seconds, and then Cruthers and Butler agreed. They both told this guy, "Get that DMORT thing also."

It was eerie because I don't know if they didn't want to believe it, but it was very hard because they're theory is everybody is always alive until proven otherwise. You just didn't need any proof that there were going to be people dead there, just knowing the devastation. Operations sort of commenced.

Then there was the funny things that happened by history. They didn't have any command board of sorts. They took a white car, like a fire safety car they use, the fire education car, the little Chevys or the little Fords. They wiped off the hood of the car, and the guy had a grease pencil and, lo and behold, the hood of the car became the command post.

So wherever the hood is now -- I don't know where it is now, but you have to get that hood for the archive. I'm sure it was washed off

by now. But they used the hood of the car, and that was the command post for hours upon hours.

When we actually moved down towards Vesey Street, they drove the car down towards Vesey Street and they used it as the command post. It was a command board. There's a little joke out of everything, but you have to have it. That's what we used, the hood of a car. So it's actually a pretty interesting thing.

Later on, a couple of hours into this, Chief Peruggia turned white as a ghost. He grabs everybody and tells them that they found the Commissioner and they found Chief Ganci and they were both killed. We couldn't get body bags. We were talking to corrections, and we kept telling them where to bring the bags. Not hard.

You couldn't understand why they couldn't figure out where it was, because there was no street. There were no street signs. There were no markings. The bridge took everything down, the walkway. Apparently he was near the walkway. I never saw him. I never got down there until much later on that evening. You couldn't do it. You just couldn't get around.

That night I walked around with one of the chiefs. I think it may have been Chief Butler. We went a couple of blocks in every direction, and you couldn't believe the devastation: big fire trucks crushed, ambulances crushed, vehicles crushed. The amount of devastation was just unbelievable.

We had a fire marshal with us and they were marking stuff where they saw it on a map and trying to writing down where things were, and you just couldn't believe where things were and what they looked like.

We went up to the third floor of the World Financial Center, and we had a command post there the first night. We were looking out over it, and it was amazing to see these big backhoe vehicles coming in to move things. You watch them at construction sites. But to pick up a step van that used to be a hazmat support unit, pick it up and just drop it off to the side; pick up what was an old EMS Chevy -- they're white and gold now -- pick up the Chevy and just drop it into a container truck, into a container, a garbage container.

It was amazing, the devastation that was there. Rescue trucks just covered. You knew that all these people were gone. Sitting in the corner of the room, the back corner, were two firemen. I don't know if one was an officer or not but there were two firemen calling companies and just trying to figure out who was missing and who was not missing, a list. They must have had like 500 names in the beginning. It was just unbelievable.

I was collecting names of missing EMS people. I was just writing off the names that this kid had written on a list because he was told to give it to me. Chief Carrasquillo, Chief Gombo, my name was on the list, Chief Kowalczyk. Chief Peruggia's name was on the list. Bruce Medjuck's name was on the list. Karen Deshore's name was on the list. Roger Moore's name was on the list.

Nobody knew where these people were. The list was long. There had to be 30 names on the list that he read off to me. I'm scratching off the names, and I realize I'm Captain Sickles. I wrote my own name. The guy said, "No, no, no."



Captain Sickles is a big fat guy. I met him once before." "No, no, it's me. Thank you."

It was comical at one point, but I knew where most of these people were gone already. I knew Chief Gombo. He went up to OEM. Chief Carrasquillo was standing there. Chief Peruggia was standing there. Chief Pascale, they made her stay up north because she was wheezing away, but she was around. Chief Kowalczyk was around. We didn't know where Karen Deshore was for a long time. We didn't know where Bruce Medjuck was for a long time. We didn't know where a lot of people were for a long time.

Chief McCracken's name was on this list also. We didn't know where he was for a long time, and he showed up. As a matter of fact, as I was writing the list, maybe five minutes later he came walking up the block. Scratched his name off the list.

Then the list got smaller and smaller and smaller. Nobody knew who was on the New York Hospital ambulance, but we knew they were missing. Two from Cabrini were missing. Carlos Lillo, we had his partner. We didn't know where

he was. We had Quinn's partner. We didn't know where he was.

The list, very early on we were actually able to narrow it down to like ten names. Then we found out Karen went to New Jersey and Roger was in New Jersey somewhere, so we were able to get them off.

We whittled it down to -- we didn't have on that list the person from Hunter or the person from metro care that was from Albert Einstein. We didn't have them on the list. We didn't know about them. The Hunter guy, they're just not in our system. We have no way of tracking them.

The Albert Einstein person, I didn't know about that -- I wasn't doing it anymore when we found out. We were trying to do patient tracking. There was no patient tracking. It was very annoying. You called communications, and you just got put on hold, they couldn't help you, no one could do anything.

I know hundreds and hundreds of patients went to hospital, but we had no patient tracking, we had no victim tracking. So we had

to start sending -- from the command post we sent what supervisors were available to area hospitals, and fire marshals, just tracking down firemen and EMS personnel and police officers, and that was their goal.

The command post wasn't worried about civilians. We couldn't track them all. There were just thousands of people. But they wanted to find out so they could identify who was missing from public safety. It was tough.

So that information was hard getting it back and forth. There was lack of communication, but because radios were down. The Fire Department communications vehicle was down by City Hall originally because it couldn't get closer. It died. We had no command post vehicle. We couldn't get one in. We couldn't get an operational one. So they got that up and running, and that showed up much later on in the event.

It was just hard. Anything that you tried to do, it was just very hard. Things weren't going smoothly. Things weren't going the way they should go. It was very hard getting

people up and operational. Everyone had concerns about everything. They were just wanting to call for 30 seconds. It was very, very hard.

Some things were annoying. One guy walks up and says, "I have to go home. I volunteered for my community tours for the month. I don't have to stay all the time here. I want to go home now." I just looked at him and I said, "And?"

I couldn't believe what was coming out of some people's mouths. It was just amazing. The personal toll it had on me, I don't know. I don't know if I was the last one to see this poor guy Chief Ganci was alive. How do you tell his wife that your husband died a hero, trying to get everybody to safety?

He was with Commissioner Feehan toward the end. Why the two of them didn't go off to a command post and try at the first collapse try to put this back together and try to put organization together, the first thing this guy thought of was to walk further south, trying to get people to safety and figure out what was going on.

I saw him -- I don't know what was going through his mind, but it was perceived as he was just looking to get people to a safe area. How do you tell that to somebody? People don't understand that. I think I'm the last one to see this poor guy alive, and he was killed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I don't know the condition of Chief Ganci, but I understand he was pretty much in the same condition.

It's just amazing the amount of devastation. When you look at this day after day, it's amazing. I don't know what else to say.

Later on my missing personnel -- I told you earlier I saw Pat on the street and he told me his partner was missing. When we got to the River Terrace, she was standing there. Everybody's gray because they were all covered in soot. She was clean. She was clean. She was absolutely clean. That was striking.

Walking up Vesey when we went to the North End when we went to the Renaissance Hotel, I saw my command car. The vehicle next to it was no windows, no nothing. I said, "Dan --" my car

was clean. There was dust. The vehicles on the other side of it, nothing, clean. I couldn't understand. Was there a wall that just stopped it?

It was just pretty funny. You walk up and you -- and that's why my car was stolen.

What's his name, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I

was there for 24 hours. I want to go home. I have no way of getting home.

Oh, 844 is up at staging. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I was on site for 25 hours. I had to see this devastation, what was going on. When you walk away, there were some funny stories. But this girl was absolutely clean. Laura was clean [REDACTED] She clung to me. I couldn't get her off of me. I put her in an ambulance, a Cabrini truck, I think it was,

and I sent her to the piers further north.

At a later point I actually hooked up -- when I had a chance to call the station, the first thing I said is "Have we heard from Richiusa or Seibert? Did they get back together?" "They're here. They're together. The truck has a broken window." "I don't give a flip about the truck. Are they alive?" "Pat has a knee injury. He's cut up, but he's okay." All right. That was it.

I was happy. I didn't lose anybody from here. Everybody got out safe. A lot of my people showed up. There was one of my guys that was on jury duty, Smith. I turned around, and I don't know what time he arrived there -- we were at the command post -- and there he is in uniform. "I'm here, Cap, ready to help out. What have you got for me?" "Aren't you on jury duty?" "I got canceled" "Oh, good." That's how he found out about this; he was in the car on the way home.

It's just amazing what goes through your head when you were there: "Why are you here? You're on jury duty." It was amazing.

I'm standing here looking at this map, and it's not here anymore. It's just not there. It's just amazing.

Unless you have anything else. That was it. This was the first two or three hours that I was there.

Q. I just need to make some notes on the map itself. When you went into Manhattan after the first crash, once you got closer downtown, do you remember what route you took to actually get down to the incident?

A. I think we came across Chambers. I think Vesey was the first staging area. I don't remember if Vesey was the first staging area. I don't remember if Chambers-- it had to be Vesey. Where's Stuyvesant High School?

Q. Stuyvesant is off the map.

A. Stuyvesant is up here by Chambers?

Q. Further north, yeah.

A. So the first staging area was up by Chambers. When I arrived I walked from Chambers down to the Trade Center. No, where is the Renaissance Hotel? The Renaissance Hotel is off of Vesey. The Renaissance Hotel is off of Vesey.



Q. Yeah, Vesey and North End.

A. The first staging --

Q. The movie theater?

A. Right. The first staging was somewhere around Vesey. Here's the Renaissance Hotel. The first staging was somewhere around Vesey. Howie Hahn dropped me off at Vesey and West, and I walked up to the north tower, where I met Chief Gombo. Then we went across the street, which would be Two World Financial Center, and we evacuated that. So I was over there.

Arriving on the scene we came down Chambers to Vesey. That's how we arrived on the scene. We came out of the Midtown Tunnel, we came downtown, we zigzagged a little bit around traffic, and we came across Chambers.

Q. Okay. Do you remember the second plane striking the tower?

A. I don't know if we were on the scene. I believe that's when we were inside this tower, and that's when we evacuated this tower and went outside.

Q. And Lieutenant Medjuck and Captain Olszewski?

A. They were on Vesey. I don't know if they were over here by Vesey and West.

Q. This is actually West Broadway.

A. West Broadway. I don't know if they were by West Broadway or they were by Church, but they were in this neighborhood.

Q. Right.

A. I tend to believe they were closer to West Broadway than Church. Actually I left it at home. I have all my notes from the first day and the days coming. I have it in one reporter pad. I left it home by accident. They were over here. They were on Vesey in this neighborhood.

Q. Okay. Any other thoughts or opinions, comments?

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0557, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110190

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JEFFREY WARNER

Interview Date: November 2, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 2nd, 2001. The time is now 0745 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT WARNER: EMT Jeffrey Warner, badge number 2933, Battalion 45, Queens.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 45 and is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jeffrey, if you would please start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. We were assigned the call 10:11 a.m., and we responded from north Queens over the 59th Street Bridge. We went over the 59th Street Bridge. My partner was driving. I was in the passenger seat. We came down Broadway. Somewhere on Broadway we picked up an auxiliary fireman. He jumped in the back. We proceeded down to the corner of Murray Street and West Broadway.

At Murray Street and West Broadway, we believe that's when the second collapse occurred.

The amount of dust in the air became a lot more thick. We heard of course a loud rumble. We didn't see it collapse; we just heard it. From discussion and the time line, it pretty much seems after the second collapse occurred.

We weren't able to safely drive the vehicle any further because of the dust in the air. There were burnt pieces of paper falling all over the place like a ticker tape parade.

We loaded up our stretcher like we would for any kind of standby, and we just started making our way as far as we could down Murray Street. We made a left on West Broadway Street, where we eventually came to Barclay Street.

At Barclay Street, which now I'm told the building that we came upon was number Seven World Trade Center, we noticed that there were people trapped who were unable to get out at that time or unaware of how to get out -- I'm not sure I want to use the word "trapped" -- on what appeared to be the eighth floor from the outside.

Myself, my partner, an off-duty fire lieutenant, somebody from OEM, who was also with

the Port Authority, and a female police lieutenant made numerous attempts to get into the building from the parking area. We finally found a door that was somewhat open on the Barclay Street side near the parking garage where there was a regular door.

We entered the building. There was some kind of an emergency escape ladder in the parking garage that went up. Myself and the off-duty fire lieutenant went up the ladder, and we were met maybe a story or two up with a Plexiglas trapdoor that was padlocked.

The fire lieutenant told me that it was padlocked, and I remember that the OEM guy had a Halligan tool. I told the boss I was going back on the ladder to get the Halligan tool and I was going to bring it up to him.

He made numerous attempts to try and open the lock; it failed. We were alerted to evacuate the building by Lieutenant Scullion and Lieutenant Frazier of the former ERS.

We came out of the building, and we gathered all our equipment. We were met with -- we had already been with but we had more

equipment that was brought over to us by the carpenters union.

We left the building. My partner and I went to get our vehicle. We got our vehicle back down eventually to where our equipment was, loaded everything up, left the area and went over to Chambers and West Street. There was an EMS staging area set up there.

Everything seemed to be organized from then on. We spent most of the afternoon parked over there.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Nicole Ferrell.

Q. Nicole Ferrell?

A. Nicole Ferrelo, F-E-R-R-E-L-L.

Q. The equipment that the carpenters brought over --

A. Yes.

Q. -- what kind of stuff did they bring over?

A. The carpenters brought over lots of jugs of spring water from spring water machines. It was a self-contained suffocating breathing apparatus, but it wasn't a Scott pack. I think

was like made by MSA or something. They had like really old, long cylinders of oxygen. I think they may have had one of those MASH-style stretchers, the folding stretchers.

The corner where we had left our equipment initially was where they started putting more equipment. It almost became like a small depot, but it wasn't -- it only remained that way like 45 minutes, because we ended up taking all our equipment and heading over to that staging area on Chambers and West Street.

Q. From the time you arrived on scene in the area other Broadway and Murray until you met up with Lieutenant Scullion and Lieutenant Frazier, any encounters with any other EMS personnel or officers?

A. Yeah, there was the off-duty MOS. He said he lived in Jersey. He came over in his own vehicle. He had like a non-issue tech bag, but he had a uniform on and a coat on and a helmet on. He was the one who gave me the cartridges for my mask that I had gotten from the Port Authority van when we arrived down there.

Q. Do you know who he was?



A. No. I think he was either from Battalion 4 or Battalion 8. He had a goatee, in his late twenties, early thirties, really nice guy. We had a couple interactions with him. He was just there to help. He worked there without a unit.

We had seen that one guy who was assigned to OEM that worked for EMS and telling him where we were coming from. He was in civilian clothes. There was the one paramedic that started getting real bossy. I'm not even sure what his name was. I know there was that one EMT or medic dressed like a lieutenant, but he started giving orders and we realized he was only one of us. We're like, you know --

As far as interaction down there, more civilians or guys from the unions, electrical workers, carpenters. And off-duty firefighters were down there.

Q. Any patients, walking wounded, anything like that that you encountered?

A. Initially when we arrived down there, my partner treated a guy with either an arm or a shoulder injury. She gave him a sling and a

shot, and he ended up just running away.

Q. Sorry, that was --

A. Yeah, that was outside. I failed to mention that. That was initially when we initially arrived on Broadway and Murray. I wasn't even aware of that until afterwards because I hadn't known my partner had done that until I saw the in the newspaper.

Like I said, I was loading up the stretcher with equipment. I guess she just sat him down on the back bumper and treated him, and he just kept going north. Like I said, there was a huge exodus of people just going up north.

We encountered some reporters and stuff. We were very careful about what we said to them. We weren't even really sure who we were talking to. We were like, "Yeah, we're from EMS," and just left it at that.

That was really it until we got over to Chambers and West Street until we saw more EMS workers later on that day.

Q. Any thoughts or comments or opinions on what happened that you would like to add?

A. No, just -- when we got over to

Chambers and West Street, that's when it seemed like things started to get really organized. You really couldn't get on the radio at all. Every radio was jammed up. It was impossible to talk on the radio. Communication was zilch. I think a lot of people got on the radio and they just kept talking and talking.

Other than that, organizationally until later on that day when the boss knew who we were, what we were doing there, and got us all in the staging area by BMCC. That was really it as far as being down in this area right here by Seven World Trade Center. As far as that's concerned, we were kind of on our own down there.

That's really it.

Q. Okay. I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0755 hours, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110192

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN KARIN DESHORE

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. DESHORE

INVESTIGATOR TAMBASCO: Today is November 7. I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We are doing an interview with Captain Karin Deshore of Battalion 46 into the events of September 11 at the World Trade Center. Interview time is beginning at 0549 a.m.

Q. Captain, would you be good enough to tell us your story?

A. Okay, on 9-11-01 I reported for duty as usual, at 0500 hours. Lieutenant Spiro Yioras was sent from Battalion 49 to be Conditions 46. He arrived here roughly around 0615 hours. Mr. Keller, who became part of the persons responding with me, arrived for duty at 0630 hours. I don't know the exact time, but I was sitting behind my desk when Mr. Keller came into my office and told me that an airplane had just hit the World Trade Center.

Because Mr. Keller is a prankster, I told him to leave me alone, and get out of my office. Then he said to me it was really true. I looked at his face. I got up and sure enough there was smoke coming out of the World Trade Center building. We had the television in our lunchroom.

Thinking it was a possibly accident of a

K. DESHORE

Cessna or something hitting the World Trade Center, I did become concerned, but at that time I didn't have a command car. I didn't respond. When it became apparent that a commercial airliner had hit the World Trade Center, the first hit, I called Lieutenant Yioras in from patrol. He came here and another one of my employees, Mr. Prue, also called and asked did I want him to come in, since he lived right around the corner and I advised him, come on in. When Lieutenant Yioras arrived, Lieutenant Yioras, myself and Mister EMT Keller, who is here on restricted duty, but I still felt he could respond with me, if it was just as a matter of being my aide or carrier or assist and Mr. Prue responded in command car 825.

It is my recollection that we drove Northern Boulevard to the 59 Street bridge. At the beginning of the 59 Street bridge, the second airliner hit and we witnessed it. Mr. Keller later on told me that we were still at the office here, but I remember it hitting when we just hit the 59 Street bridge on the Queens side. People were just standing on the 59 Street bridge in total disbelief. No traffic was moving. Traffic agents were trying to clear the way to get us over the bridge. We could see the smoke coming out of

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the buildings, explosions, you know, dark smoke coming out of both buildings.

We made it over the 59 Street bridge, made a left on Second Avenue and we took the rear end of a caravan of police vehicles, Fire Department vehicles, black cars with sirens and we just followed them, because there was just no other openings. People were standing everywhere on Second Avenue and just looking, because you couldn't see the twin towers, but you could see the smoke coming, you know, above the area.

I was not driving, Lieutenant Yioras was driving and somewhere we made a right turn. In the meantime, I notified communication, was told to switch to Citywide, which we did, and I told him who was all responding and I was advised that I was cleared to respond even prior to that, because we also heard EMS employees on the air advising that they were on the scene of the locations and there were no supervisors and they didn't know what to do, where to go or who to await.

So they were told by communications to go to various staging areas. We were told to go to West and Vesey. I have no idea where West and Vesey is and we just kept following the caravan of emergency vehicles.

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We arrived on the west side and I believe it was West and Vesey. We couldn't go any further. It was in front of -- just prior to one of the twin towers, and I believe it is number 1 twin tower. All right.

Just as we got there, Chief Charlie Wells was there trying to set up an area with all of the ambulance crews that were just standing there and really didn't have anybody to give them any directions. He saw Lieutenant Yioras and myself and he basically asked us to keep in touch with him and be part of his contingency.

Most of the individuals that were there were Hatzolah volunteers, maybe 3 and 4 to a bus. I had one Flushing paramedic unit and I remember it was Al Touro on the paramedic unit. We also had a student that was his first day riding as a paramedic student. He, of course, had no helmet. I had another BLS unit from Flushing. I don't know their radio designation, but the two ladies' names are Jen and Bonnie and I really didn't know that they were ladies either.

Later on I found out a react unit and one of the gentlemen was Orlando Rivera I believe. They were told basically to respond with myself and Chief Wells to the further part of the World Trade Center



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buildings, the southwest corner of building number 2.

I left Lieutenant Yioras in charge of all the ambulances. He was to collect the keys and as the units would get patients, they would come back to him, get the keys and then respond to a hospital and then come back to him or whatever they were told to do. I was with Mr. Keller and Mr. Prue. This is funny, but Mr. Keller told me that I looked like an ass and I told him it was really unprofessional for him to say that. I said to him why would you say that. He said to me I had my helmet on backwards. So I put my helmet on the right way. Apparently I was a little excited at that time, because I was trying to get everybody as close to the west side as I could because of the falling debris and the bodies kept coming down.

I spoke with paramedic Charl from Flushing and I said to him did you see that, he said what. I said just look up to your left. Here the bodies kept coming out of both buildings. Some of them were on fire. Some of them were moving, others were not moving and the worst part was as they hit the ground, they would go like a splash sound. You could just see the whole body would just disintegrate into pieces and splatter all over and the sound and I saw a couple of

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them do that, was just enough to just make me tune out to that.

I became more concerned with everybody in my contingency not getting hit by falling debris. I had the rear. Chief Wells had the front and all the volunteers were in the back. I was trying to keep them moving and trying to move left, because once I got them out from underneath the buildings, they weren't getting hit by bodies, but the debris just kept coming out, and the billowing smoke and as people kept pouring out of the buildings, there was total chaos. They were coming in our direction and before we could do anything for them, they would turn and they would go back in.

There was no organization, anybody saying hey, just keep going in this direction. People just would not listen to any kind of advice, suggestion or demand you made of them to keep them safe. My concern at that time was basically all of the volunteers that I had who had no helmets. So as we got over to the furthest end of the World Trade Center building, which was now building number 2, the southwest corner, Chief Wells said to me Karin, give me one unit to go in with me. Go on the command frequency and when I need another unit, I will call you. Then you know that the

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other unit has a patient and gone back to their bus, which at that time I felt saved a lot of lives instead of us just all go into the building. His decision was an extremely wise choice.

I didn't know that the two people I chose were two ladies, they were Jen and Bonnie, because they were the only ones with helmet. In the meantime I am yelling to get everybody else underneath a pedestrian overpass over the street, because again they had no helmets and the debris, there was no longer danger of them getting hit by bodies, but the debris was just coming down. It was unbelievable.

Charlie Wells, my last recollection of him was going towards the building and Bonnie and Jen. I told them to follow Chief Wells with their helmet on, but they didn't have a long board so I said to -- later on I found out they were ladies. Don't you think you should take a long board with you and they didn't have one. Somebody went and grabbed a long board from someplace and they had their stretcher up, they laid it on the side of the stretcher.

As they are walking now they are tripping on the straps, so I told them -- again, I told them this is not right. You are going to fall and hurt

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yourself. You won't be able to help anybody and they took the long board and put it on top. My last recollection was of them going towards the building.

I asked at that time -- everybody else was with me still and I kept pushing them back and back and back, because I said what is this, a subway at the end of the overpass, because there is fire coming out of the ground. I didn't realize that that was a car already on fire over there.

All the ambulances were parked right there in front of me also, underneath the overpass, just neatly parked towards the buildings, all of them. There must have been at least two rows of ambulances, maybe 10 of them. Of course cars parked everywhere else.

Apparently, my last recollection like I said, was Chief Wells and the two ladies going towards the building. I didn't know that Chief Wells made it out of the building and apparently my delaying their entering the building, Jen and Bonnie, might have saved them all, because they also survived. My back was towards the building, trying to push everybody up. Grassy hill was there and up underneath that overpass, when somebody just simply shouted and I have no idea who it was, it's blowing.

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I had no clue what was going on. I never turned around because a sound came from somewhere that I never heard before. Some people compared it with an airplane. It was the worst sound of a rolling sound, not a thunder. I can't explain it, what it was. All I know is -- and a force started to come hit me in my back. I can't explain it. You had to be there. All I know is I had to run because I thought there was an explosion.

I ran about 10, 12 feet up this little grassy hill and by then this force and this sound caught up with me already. I threw myself behind the last support column of the pedestrian overpass. It became pitch dark. The sound got worse, the force just kept passing me. At times I thought it was like an orange light maybe, coming past me.

I was unaware what was happening. I thought it was just a major explosion. I didn't know the building was collapsing. I was sitting with my left side towards the support beam, total darkness, total noise. I felt beyond alone. I felt desolated. I felt like, all I could say was people think about their families and whatever. All I kept saying to myself within me I don't want to die, I don't want to die, I

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don't want to die.

I can't tell you how long it was before it died down. I just felt like the darkness the loneliness and being alone was the worst thing I ever experienced in my life and not being able to breathe. There was no air. Whatever this explosion was simply sucked all the oxygen out of the air. You couldn't breathe and the feeling of suffocation, I can't explain no further on that.

I don't know how long it took. All of a sudden it was all over and the silence set in. Nobody cried, nobody talked, nobody made a sound. There was nothing. Absolutely nothing. You could open your eyes, it was pitch black. Breathing became a little bit easier but I just sat there. I didn't know what was happening and I just sat there. Again, I can't give you time periods, 5 minutes, 5 seconds or however long it might have been.

Somehow over my right shoulder I hear this male voice, "is there anybody out there." I didn't know at first should I answer, should I not answer. Then I just said I'm over here, please don't leave me. The man said I'm over here, I can't see. That's when I opened my eyes. I said I can't see either. He said

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okay I'm going to talk. I said I'm going to talk and we will find each other. That's exactly what we did. We found each other. We kept talking to each other. We found each other. Nobody else answered, nobody else said a word. I was unaware that there were people from my unit laying all around me. They described it later on where they were.

I had a police van in front of me, about 6 feet that I remember being there. I saw a picture later on, it was totally destroyed. Two feet to my right there was an overturned car, which I saw later on the pictures also. I had steel beams all around me.

Like I said I found this gentleman and we held onto each other like little kids. By then we were coughing, vomiting, spitting. It was just -- we were trying to breathe. It was total darkness. We couldn't see anything behind us at all. We found about 5 or 6 more people and we held onto each other. Like little kids, we walked, as I found out later on, towards the water. Since I didn't know any of the location I didn't know there was a marina. We just walked in a direction where we could walk. We held onto each other. We were all coughing, vomiting. Some of us fell down. We would pick each other up. There might

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have been 6, 7, 8 of us by now. There were dead bodies laying everywhere, obvious signs of death.

I had no ambulances. I had no medical equipment. We had nothing, just the way we were, that's what we had. Towards our -- as we kept walking down a street, I have no idea what street it was, halfway down that street, two ladies came out of a building. They brought us some water. We started to rinse our mouths out and we started to -- I at least, I know I irrigated my eyes because I had whatever it was in my eyes and that made it even worse. Now I apparently created mud in my eyes. As I was told later on, we had granulated cement and jet fuel mixture all over our uniforms and our bodies.

It just got worse. We now picked up a fireman that was severely severely injured. I had some female police officers that had severe cuts and lacerations and people were just bleeding, by now maybe 10 of us. We were just -- I didn't have any obvious signs of injuries that I could see on myself, but other people were bleeding.

We went into this location of business where the ladies came out and found out it was a distribution place for napkins and table cloths for restaurants. We



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used their napkins to bandage people up. Somebody found a long board and we put the injured fireman on. He was severely injured, bleeding from the rear of his neck or occipital area in the back of his head.

Police officers now came in. Again, maybe by now we were 12, thinking I was Fire Department and had the Fire Department helmet on, I was chosen to run the outfit there, because I kept telling them bring all the wounded in here that you can find. We started bandaging them up and so on. The officer said do you have any ambulances. I said I have nothing. We had no equipment whatsoever.

Somebody apparently found some face masks and we attempted to put them on, but they hindered us from breathing even more and we just couldn't breathe. It became a little lighter out. By now it was grayish. The officer saw that there was a little marina. They went across there to try to get the boats that were docked there started and they couldn't.

After I bandaged everybody up and everybody was sort of calm in the location. Like I said, maybe 10, 12 people now. Now I also had two elderly females that were a part of that business there. So we had maybe 12 individuals. I went outside to see what I

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could do, when I saw the second building of the World Trade Center, still unbeknown to me the first one had collapsed.

Somewhere around the middle of the World Trade Center, there was this orange and red flash coming out. Initially it was just one flash. Then this flash just kept popping all the way around the building and that building had started to explode. The popping sound, and with each popping sound it was initially an orange and then a red flash came out of the building and then it would just go all around the building on both sides as far as I could see. These popping sounds and the explosions were getting bigger, going both up and down and then all around the building.

I went inside and I told everybody that the other building or there was an explosion occurring up there and I said I think we have another major explosion. I don't know if we are all going to be safe here. I told them I can't force you, but I don't know if we are going to be safe here. I'm going to try to get as far away from this building as possible.

Unbeknown to me, a half a block down was the water.

Now we are picking up this injured fireman.

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It took 4 to carry him. We are picking up all the injured. We took the two elderly ladies from the building with us and now 10, 12, of us, 14 of us, are going out of the building and further down, only to get down to the water.

Down at the water was one EMS person. I saw his Fire Department uniform, with his hands over his ears, yelling I can't find my partner, has anybody seen my partner and he is just running back and forth. He wouldn't stand still long enough for me to even speak with him. I had another EMS person, later on I found out he is from Battalion 20, his name is Kemp, the last name is Kemp. There were two ladies there that apparently had been jogging up and down this East River or west river, whatever you want to call it, and they were in little jogging shorts, jogging in circles. You couldn't stop them. I tried to stop them. I tried to find out if they were injured or anything. I couldn't stop them.

So here these explosions are getting bigger and louder and bigger and louder and I told everybody if this building totally explodes, still unaware that the other building had collapsed, I'm going in the water. I said I can swim. I'm taking somebody with me

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and hold them, because it was maybe a 6 foot drop.

Just then, a small Jersey boat, it was Jersey police officers as I thought, entered this little marina. By then the darkness had turned to gray and there was light on the other side, but you couldn't make out that light. Maybe because my eyes were that bad I couldn't see that good, but there was light and the boat came in. I don't recall that I had to go down some stairs to get to that boat. I saw that later on when I went to visit the site about a month later.

We went down, we carried everybody down. The elderly ladies got on. The fireman was put on board and the police officers and the EMS person, maybe 10, 12, 14 people got on the boat. I had not got on the boat yet. There were 3 officers, two officers and one sergeant, what I thought was a sergeant. As I'm standing at the door to the boat, the sergeant yells at me and pardon me for my language, what the fuck are you going to do now. Are you going to come or not. I'm still standing there trying to figure out what my next move should be, when the same sergeant says fucking shit, it's coming at us, and that's a quote.

Again, I didn't see what was happening behind me, but knowing of all the explosions I thought here

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was another explosion coming and this sound again and this wave of this force again. I just jumped on the boat, closed the door with my left hand and just sank down to my knees. Here whatever it was just came right at us again. The sergeant is yelling at the one officer. The second officer was in the back with some of the people that had been in the back of the boat. I had no clue what was going on back there. The sergeant is yelling at the second officer, get the fuck out of here, get the fuck out of here. I'm sorry for using that word repeatedly. The poor guy behind the steering wheel is saying I can't go any place, we are tied on.

That is about what saved our lives, because this force came at us and hit us with everything. The boat was attempting to overturn and it kept hitting in the back against the pier. Again, I was just -- by then I was resigned to die. I didn't mind dying because I was with other people, you know, and the guy behind the steering wheel just sank to his knee and the sergeant just stood at the other door. I have no clue how long that lasted. I was -- my back was towards it and as I'm sitting in this corner there I was just resigned, this is it, it can't happen to me a second time. We were -- this time was a difference. We were

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capable of breathing and I was with somebody.

When again, I don't know how the window didn't get broken or how the boat wasn't overturned, nothing happened really, but when all of it quieted down again, the sergeant opened the door and he got out and he untied the boat and by the time this starched individual with the starched uniform came in, he was covered with everything. He told us this guy who -- officer who finally got off the floor, just get the fuck out of here now. He said I can't see where I'm going. He said just turn the boat to the left and every time you hit something turn it to the left and turn it to the left and turn it to the left till you get out in the open water and when you get out, just keep going. That's exactly what this officer did.

As we finally got out of this small opening of that marina, you could see the light in New Jersey, because he apparently was by then was going in that direction. I got up from there because I appeared to be in the way. I got up from there and I went down into that small cabin that was down there and he was -- they apparently had taken, thrown the fireman and long board down into that cabin. The fireman had come off the long board and was just laying there. He was

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still bleeding profusely.

I went down there and I straightened out his leg. The long board was laying half way going up the stairs and people were just sitting and hanging there and by then they had gotten back on to the top of the boat and the back. I straightened out his leg and -- sorry -- he had all the stuff coming out of his pockets and I said to him I'm going to empty out your pockets because you got -- they looked like hose connections, metal and everything in his pockets and his turnout coat and I took everything out and I threw it to my right. There was like a bench or an area there. I just threw it. He still had his helmet on. He was laying in his own blood and he says to me just I'm all right. My name is Bob. So I said to him my name is Karin and we just held hands. So we just held hands till we got over to Jersey.

When we got over to Jersey they told me to get the hell out of the area and I said I can't get up right now. I just couldn't get up. I didn't have the strength to get up. They came and got Bob and they put him on the long board. I saw them turn him over to my side. They put the long board and the 4 of them got Bob up and I still couldn't get up. They came and they

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physically stood me up. I couldn't get up. I did walk up those about 3 stairs up and I got to the top of the boat and they weren't ready for us in Jersey.

We were the first boat to get over there. There was nobody there. The cops kept yelling, there were cops there. The cops kept yelling, just give him your hand, give him your hand, put your foot up. I can hear all of this. I couldn't react. I know I didn't do it, but I could hear them. Somebody finally took my right hand and gave it to somebody and they took one of my legs and they put it up there and gave it to somebody. I mean they put it up and they pulled me up and they pushed me up. Then somebody came and just assisted me and they put some sheets over on the pier and they put me right there. I don't know what happened to anybody else. They started coming in, medical teams, and I don't know what happened to Bob.

So we were just laying there and again they gave us water and they irrigated our eyes and it just made it worse. By then, we were vomiting. Some of us were vomiting blood and so on, but I appeared to be one of the better ones off, because they had triage tags and I started making out triage tags and putting it on everybody, just their names and Ladder company or



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Engine and EMS and civilians and I made triage tags up for everybody.

Maybe 45 minutes to an hour later they got not ambulances, but some vans to take us to Jersey City medical center, 4 of us. When we got there they had just set up some kind of an auditorium or whatever. They took us into the auditorium and they proceeded to treat us with -- I got albuterol treatments and I got an injection. They got an ophthalmologist and they cleaned out my eyes and my ears were just, I don't know. I couldn't even hear any more, probably from all the noise.

My problem was I refused to give up my helmet. I would not surrender my helmet because I didn't know when the next thing was going to come. Somebody dropped an oxygen tank and 4 of us hit the deck. I mean I just got out of that wheelchair and I threw my self on the ground looking for someplace to hide. I can remember that.

But the most unbelievable thing is that when I looked down, my right foot had no sock on. I found my sock in my pocket. To the best of my recollection, as I child I was always told by my grandmother, if you ever have to jump in the water take your shoes and

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socks off because it will pull you down. I think in anticipation of jumping in the water I started taking my shoes and socks off and then saw the boat come and put my shoe back on. That's the best I can remember.

After treatment, we were taken up to a conference room where they had gathered all fire, PD and EMS people. I saw some really traumatized individuals. By then, I had this only survivor syndrome. I hadn't heard, seen or anybody from my unit. My feeling of sending Charlie Wells and those two ladies into that building, because by then people said that both buildings had collapsed and I had figured that everybody was in there. It just took a total mental toll on me until maybe sometime in the afternoon, around 4, 5 o'clock Al Touro was brought in, the paramedic from Flushing.

We saw each other and we just stood there and we hugged and we cried. We just cried. I had been unable to get any kind of message to my family because the phones were out. My husband works over at Battalion 47 in the Rockaways. The last transmission from me was that I had lost all of my people, that I was with individuals and I was trying to evacuate them. After that there was no more transmission. Even

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that apparently didn't get through to people.

Lieutenant Gleeson here went to the command center here. He initially had me declared missing, then missing and possibly dead and then definitely confirmed passed away. That of course, reached my family and they had a very hard time trying to figure out what had happened.

My husband left work that evening at 5 o'clock after doing 12 hours tours. He immediately caused an accident and totalled the car. He had to be picked up by one of my children Danielle, and she brought him here and that was about 8:30, 9 o'clock that evening when I reached them for the first time and told them I was alive.

By 10 o'clock that night a minister from Jersey got a bus from somewhere and because the city was closed down, we got an escort from the Jersey City police and we were all brought back to somewhere in New York where we wanted to go. I reached here at 10:30 that night. That was for the first time my family really knew that I was all right.

We were allowed to take showers at the medical center because by 1, 2:00 in the afternoon all that soot that was covering us had created a total rash

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situation. I think I stood under that shower for, I don't even know how long, but I couldn't get it off. I found debris inside my clothes that was just unbelievable how it got there. It just can't be explained. My uniform was totally gray. It was covered with a soot that I can't explain what it even was. My visor on my helmet was cracked, but I think I was one of the better ones that got away as far as injury was concerned.

I'm alive. Anything else I can tell you?

Q. Quite a story. Quite an experience.

A. Well, it hasn't left me. Yes, people came here to give us counseling. After a while, while I felt they had the best of intentions, after a while I just simply had to tell them please don't come here no more, because if you come here and you sit like you are sitting across from me at the desk and ask me one more time how do you feel. Do you want to talk about it, I will go off the deep end.

The only people I want to talk to is the people that were there with me. What has really helped me was to know that nobody in my unit got killed or seriously injured. The most they had were fractures. Rabbi Birnhack confirmed that all the Hatzolah

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volunteers survived. I spoke to all of the other people that were with me and they all survived. I was so grateful that Charlie Wells survived. He was the first one from my unit into that building.

I have a problem with the whole situation still. I wish the Fire Department would come around with professionals and not people that are from a local counseling service or whatever -- excuse me for a moment. My concern really was that no one from the Fire Department made any kind of effort to even find out how we were doing. I didn't get a phone call. I didn't see my Chief until Saturday a week after that, which is 10 days later.

I even received a phone call from Mr. Velez, the executive director of Elmhurst Hospital at my home, but no one from EMS contacted me to find out how I was doing. There was great concern here about some other people, which after I had gone through all the problems I had to handle, because again nobody was available to handle anything at the facility here concerning the other individuals that had gone through this trauma.

To this day I have not been asked do I need any counselings from some certified people or do I wish to participate in counselings with a group. Elmhurst

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Hospital has offered me counseling services, which I will accept, but I feel more of an effort should have been made by the Fire Department or the EMS command to assist us that went through this.

Anything else I can help you with?

Q. No, ma'am, unless you have anything else that you would like to add.

A. I'm retiring.

Q. May I say congratulations on that.

A. Thank you.

INVESTIGATOR TAMBASCO: Thank you for your interview Captain. This interview concludes at 0633 a.m.

File No. 9110193

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JANICE OLSZEWSKI

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today is November 7th, 2001. The time is 8:45. My name is Murray Murad.

MR. CUNDARI: I'm George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: Of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

CAPTAIN OLSZEWSKI: Janice Olszewski, captain EMS operations.

MR. MURAD: The location of the interview is at Nine Metrotech at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and this is regarding the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Captain, can you just tell us what occurred on that day?

A. At what point do you want me to start?

Q. From upstairs when you heard what happened. Where were you, from the beginning?

A. I was sitting at my desk here at Metrotech on the seventh floor, and the pagers came over that there was a plane into the World Trade Center. So I went down to the end of the hall to look out the window, and you could see



that it had happened, the first plane into the building.

So I went with Lieutenant Bruce Medjuck in my sedan I was using, a marked sedan, down to the site. So we grabbed a few radios and went down there. We went across the Brooklyn Bridge and arrived at Vesey and West. I don't remember exactly where I parked the car; I really don't. It might have been right at Vesey and West. I'm pretty sure, but I'm not too -- I think.

So we got out, and we were in the vicinity of One World Trade. We were close to One World Trade at that point, and we went over and we bumped into Chief Gombo, Bruce and I. He asked us to go to the other side. So we ran down Vesey and got to Vesey and Church. I left my car where I had originally parked it.

We met up with Lieutenant Davila in his suburban, and he was already starting to set up at Fulton and Church, a triage area, right next to the Millennium Hotel, across the street from the Trade Center, the towers. So that's where we assisted in setting up the triage area for the people being evacuated out of the buildings.

Q. This was still the first plane had hit?

A. By the time we got there -- en route the second plane had hit. First plane had hit. We were on our way. When we got there we looked up and saw now the two holes. So by then the second plane had hit. Somewhere while we were driving there, it hit.

So now they both had hit, and we went over to the other side to start patient care over there. So we set up the triage area over there in front of the Millennium Hotel at Church and Fulton.

Q. Church and Fulton?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. You had a good view of the towers?

A. Yeah.

People were being evacuated, and units started to come in, from all agencies, as well as more supervisors. So as more supervisors came in, we were assigning them to each sector. We set up virtually all the sectors we can set up, and we started to get going with triage with triage tags, setting up areas where people were more badly hurt than others, telling other people

to just keep going if they were relatively all right.

Q. A lot of people in that area?

A. Yeah, there were. What we're talking about here, the time line for me being there in particular was something like 30 to 35 minutes. So we weren't able to do too much. We were going pretty good for what it was, though. We were starting to set up those sectors. We were setting up the sectors, staging treatment, transport, triage.

The people were pouring out of the buildings, and a lot of them were coming over to our area. I cannot estimate how many. It's impossible. They were all over the place. They were on the corner. We were trying to keep them corralled in our area, but other agencies were breaking off into other little triage areas. I think there was another one over on Liberty and Church, another section there we heard, around the corner.

So there were things sort of happening all over. So it's kind of hard to get an estimate of how many patients were in that area.

I can say in our area it was starting to become overwhelmed, that corner. There were starting to be so many. I figured we're going to have hundreds of patients coming out and we're going to have to have alternative areas to have them go, because it was too small. Right at that point the first building collapsed.

Q. The south tower?

A. The south tower, yeah.

So as we heard it start to collapse and as we saw it collapsing, we or I, a lot of us, ran east on Fulton to get away. Then the cloud caught up, and we all just scattered and did our best to get out of there. I ended up on Broadway and Fulton and went north on Broadway, kept going north on Broadway.

I set up an initial -- well, actually ambulances start to come down now south on Broadway that weren't involved in the collapse. These were fresh people coming in already, all kinds of units again coming south on Broadway. I met up with a few of them at something like Warren, Warren and Broadway.

I walked down that far and was not --

anybody who would listen to me, I didn't want them to go towards the area yet. I didn't think it was safe. I didn't know what was going on. I thought more could be happening down there. I didn't know if it was an explosion. I didn't know it was a collapse at that point. I thought it was an explosion or a secondary device, a bomb, the jet -- plane exploding, whatever.

So I didn't know what was happening, so I was attempting to stop people from going in until we could get somebody back on the radio, reestablish a new command post and know that it was safe. So I was telling them not to go down. Some still went in; some didn't.

Q. Were there radio transmissions at that time?

A. I don't remember because I didn't have one at that point. I was pretty shocked and stunned and was choking and covered with dust. I was dazed and don't remember that. I didn't have a radio, so I don't know.

So at that point you heard that the second -- I heard the rumbling again, and that was the second collapse. So now that's about

what, 10:30. That was about 10:30 now. Then I heard it again. You still didn't know what was happening, but you couldn't miss the rumbling sound. So you knew something else was happening.

So I kept going north on Broadway again. I turned around and saw the cloud coming down again, so I started to run away from that cloud again. I got a little further north up Broadway. Now more ambulances are coming south. One of them stopped. I waved, I flagged one down. One of them stopped. I got in, and I said, "Turn around and just go north, because I don't know what's going on down there. It's too dangerous. Let try to get a little further north."

So they drove me north to White, Broadway and White. There the cloud had not come that far. We got out of the cloud and the mist, and we set up a patient collection area there. About five more ambulances stopped there, and we set up and were treating patients that were coming out.

Now I started hearing things on the radio, because there were radios around me now

and I borrowed one from somebody from OMA. It was the frequency that supervisors were on. I heard Chief Kowalczyk, and he started saying that there was a new command post at Chambers and West, as I remember, to be the new command post.

So I figured, okay, it's safe. We have something reestablished over there. He was asking for supervisors and units. They were asking for units on citywide, I guess. I don't know if there was citywide. But I know they were asking for units to come back.

So the five or so units that were with me wanted to go back in, so I said, "Okay, go ahead. Go in." They started heading over. I left one unit there to keep treating the patients that were still trickling out. By then there weren't really many, and they were fine. They were pretty okay. So I left one there.

I jumped in one of the ambulances going over and said, "Can you take me to the command post?" They said, "Sure." As they drove me over -- we got as far as about West and -- I know there's Chambers on here, but I don't see it.

Q. Whatever you recall.

A. Whatever. I don't remember. I don't see it. Is it further north?

Q. Chambers is here.

A. I don't think I got -- I didn't get that far. I got stopped on West around here somewhere. There were so many emergency vehicles trying to get in, there was a little bit of a backup. So I only got about there.

I got out of the ambulance, and I bumped into a chief officer, who insisted I go to the hospital. He just basically pushed me into the ambulance and said I needed to go. So I went to the hospital at that point. I was taken over to NYU Medical Center to be treated.

When I got out, I made my way back here. I hitched a ride back here with another some sort of city vehicle, and I worked here over night until 6 in the morning.

Q. Basically after the collapse you didn't see many patients?

A. Well, the patients I saw --

Q. While you were there?

A. Oh, you mean before the collapse.

Q. After the collapse.



A. After the collapse the patients I saw were basically on White and Broadway coming out of the collapse and cloud that needed to be treated for whatever injuries, smoke inhalation, they had. We treated approximately 30 patients -- again I don't know -- for that sort of thing, while we were waiting to hear somebody come back on the radio and let us know where we should go.

After that, like I said, I went to the hospital, so no.

Q. On the original collapse, you just saw the cloud start coming at you or you saw some of the top of the building start coming down?

A. I wasn't facing it. Some people say they saw it tilting and going. I wasn't facing and I wasn't looking, so I didn't see that. But I did hear it, and then I turned around. By then the cloud had obliterated the building, so you couldn't see it going down.

Not that you were standing there waiting and watching; you were running. The only chance you had to get away was to run. So there was no watching. I just heard it, saw the cloud,

knew something catastrophic had happened, and tried to get away.

Q. Anything else?

A. No.

MR. MURAD: This concludes the interview. I'd like to thank you, Captain, for participating.

The time now is 0855, and this concludes this portion of the interview.

File No. 9110194

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT BRADLEY MANN

Interview Date: November 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today is November 7th, 2001. The time now is 1047 hours. My name is Murray Murad, M-U-R-A-D, with Richard Dun, D-U-N. We are currently sitting with Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT MANN: Bradley Mann.

MR. MURAD: And your rank?

LIEUTENANT MANN: Lieutenant.

MR. MURAD: Where do you work?

LIEUTENANT MANN: Chief of Department's office, planning unit.

MR. MURAD: This interview is being conducted at the Fire Department Headquarters at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and this is in regards to the tragic event on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Lieutenant Mann, will you give your account?

A. I was working the day tour. Approximately 10 minutes of 9, I was sitting in my cube with Captain Abdonahmod. The window in my cube overlooks Manhattan.

As we were speaking, I thought I heard some type of noise. Abdo and I turned around and

looked out the window and saw thick black smoke billowing from the top of the World Trade Center.

I got up, I walked around the corner to Chief Nigro's office, told him to look out the window. I walked down the hall to Chief Ganci's office and told him to look out the window. Chief Ganci told me to get everybody together, get as much equipment as we could find and we would meet in Manhattan.

I grabbed Lieutenant John Nevins from the document control unit. We went to the EMS command where we secured about six radios and as many helmets as we could find. We went downstairs to the street, waited outside the building, and we got into a vehicle with Chief Cassano, the Citywide Tour Commander, and we responded into Manhattan. That was approximately 10 minutes to 9 when I first looked out the window. I would say that we left headquarters probably about 9:05 a.m.

We drove into Manhattan. We crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, from mid-span on the Brooklyn Bridge, from what we could see, it looked like just about everything from the 70th

floor on up was on fire.

Chief Cassano was making some phone calls, and Lieutenant Nevins and I were discussing some things in the car as to what our role may be seeing as we didn't know what officers were already on the scene.

We arrived in Manhattan. We came over the Brooklyn Bridge, went down Park Row and drove across Murray Street to South Broadway. Chief Cassano parked his car on the corner of South Broadway and Vesey.

We exited the car. We put on our helmets and our turnout coats. Lieutenant Nevins and I made a right turn and headed west on Vesey Street between WTC 7 and WTC 2. By that point already, debris was falling from the towers. I actually was hit in the back by an unknown body part. I don't know what it was.

We headed west on Vesey Street to the intersection of West Street. At that point I saw Lieutenant Davila from battalion 4, who at that point was the EMS command officer. I asked him what he needed, and he asked me to assist him to set up the EMS staging area.

At that point Lieutenant Nevins and I established an EMS staging area on Vesey Street between West Street and West End Avenue. We had approximately 50 to 60 ambulances on the street at that point, and we were in the process of organizing them and keeping track of who was there.

As time went on, more staff chiefs arrived. Chief Gombo arrived. He took command of the incident. We spoke with him as to what type of action he wanted us to take, and he told us as soon as we had a count on how many units we had, ALS and BLS, to let him know and he would request resources as he needed them.

I would say probably about maybe a half hour or so later all of a sudden we heard a roar. And I looked at Lieutenant Nevins and he looked at me, and we looked up. And the next thing we knew there was another plane, and it crashed into the other tower.

We were in the staging area the entire time. Shortly before the first tower came down I remember feeling the ground shaking. I heard a terrible noise, and then debris just started

flying everywhere. People started running towards the staging area.

By that point we probably had 70 or 80 ambulances and vehicles in the staging area. People were jumping in their vehicles, trying to drive away from the scene. And Lieutenant Nevins and I instructed everybody to leave their vehicles and run west as far as they could until they couldn't run anymore.

The rationale behind that being is if everybody tried to get out in a vehicle at the same time, obviously the street would be clogged and nobody would be able to get out. And as it turns out, a good majority of the vehicles that we told people to leave were crushed on Vesey Street just west of West Street.

By the time the debris settled from the first collapse, we started to walk back east towards West Street, and a few minutes later -- I really don't remember the time frames because we were so busy in trying to account for who was in the staging area and who wasn't -- we basically had the same thing: The ground shook again, and we heard another terrible noise and the next



think we knew the second tower was coming down. And again we were running for our lives on Vesey Street.

We ran as far as we could, turned the corner at West End Avenue and took shelter in the lobby of an office building, where we meet met up with a lot of the other chiefs -- Chief Gombo, Chief Kowalczyk -- and we discussed some further actions plans as to what we were going to do, seeing as we knew we weren't operating in a safe area. And we decided that we were going to establish a north staging area at Chelsea Piers.

At that point myself and Chief Kowalczyk and an unknown EMT responded in an ambulance. I believe it was a Jamaica Hospital ambulance. We got a ride up to Chelsea Piers where we began to set up a staging area. I stayed at Chelsea Piers for the next three or four hours, organizing units and having resources ready to be called south.

And then sometime in the afternoon, probably 2 or 3:00, I was requested to report back down to Chambers Street, and I was put to work on the command report. And that's pretty

much it. We just started doing shift work at the command post from about 3:00 p.m. on the 11th for the next about two and a half weeks. And that's really it.

MR. MURAD: Rich, any questions?

MR. DUN: No.

Q. Were you operating with radios?

A. We did have radios. I don't even know who I got it from, to be honest -- oh, I'm sorry, I remember when I took it. We were on citywide. I was the staging officer. And until Chief Gombo took over, I was communicating with Lieutenant Davila.

MR. MURAD: Any other questions?

Lieutenant Mann, I appreciate you giving the interview. This concludes the interview, and the time now is 10:55 hours. This concludes this portion of the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110200

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSEPH FORTIS

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 9th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0717 hours. I'm conducting an interview with --

EMT FORTIS: Joseph Fortis, EMT 1376.

MR. RADENBERG: Joseph is assigned to EMS Battalion 20. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Joseph, if you would begin from when you were assigned to the job. You can pretty much take it from there.

A. Me and my partner Mike were at the station here. We first put all our stuff in the vehicle and we attempted to log on, and there was a computer problem with our ambulance. We heard the dispatcher start screaming for units. We volunteered.

"3 John, put the job on the screen," and we couldn't log on. He just said, "Head down to staging. Start heading down there. I'll give you some more information." We attempted to log on a few times on the way. We went on the

Bruckner southbound and started heading down towards the incident.

We went down the Bruckner and through that Brooklyn Battery Tunnel underpass, the Battery Park underpass. We were on our cell phones at the time, and I was talking to my mother and so was Mike. They told us a plane hit the building. We couldn't get the job up on the screen. We couldn't log on. So we were getting our information from our family.

We went down the Bruckner to the FDR, and then we jumped on the FDR and they closed the highway. We had maybe like 15 cop cars and highway cars and 3 fire trucks and like 5 ambulances. We headed down there. We came out, and we didn't know what was going on. It was just an accident at the time. We came out through the tunnel.

When we pulled up onto West Street, the whole world was pretty much blocked in front of the towers. So we actually went into the oncoming traffic. They had it closed down. We proceeded north. They told us staging was at Vesey and West.

We got there and we backed our ambulance -- I was, and Mike was teching. We backed the ambulance in. Whoever the captain was there at the scene asked us to just grab all our equipment and stay with our vehicles and we were just placed in front of the vehicles at the time. So we did that and lit up a cigarette and waited to see what they wanted to do.

I believe at that time -- I can't even tell you the time frame. We actually heard like the engines I guess for the second plane coming in, and it just got louder and, boom, the second plane hit the other tower. We stood there and we watched. I guess like a fireball cloud came down. We were all standing on the corner I guess by the pedestrian bridge off the corner there with our equipment. We were just amazed in awe.

Everybody was running at us saying evacuate and we're under attack kind of thing. Then the light went on to run. We turned around and started running west on Vesey Street, and we made it just past the American Express building.

It was just coming too fast. We couldn't get away from that cloud per se, and we

ducked into the lobby of a building there. I believe it was between -- it might have even been the American Express building on the corner there.

Q. At this point it's the collapse of the first building now?

A. No, no. This is just when the second plane.

Q. Okay.

A. The buildings were still up. So it was just a blast from I guess the second plane, I think, came in, and the dust cloud just came. We were on the corner there, and you just felt the heat. Our back and all our eyebrows were all singed and everything. We had a little flash burn because we were right -- I guess when it were came were we right on West off the corner of I guess where six was, if that was it, if this is West Street here.

Q. Yeah.

A. We were actually right by the pedestrian bridge, because when we -- the bridge is there, and we were actually over here and the ambulances were parked off the corner.

Q. South of the pedestrian bridge?

A. South of the pedestrian bridge, when I guess the second plane came in. So we ran. Everybody was running down Vesey west, and that's the way we went. After that incident and everybody composed themselves, a couple minutes later everybody was just like -- it was just chaos.

One of the people who worked here at the station, I believe he just finished dropping off his girlfriend or his wife at the Trade Center. She worked there. So we were actually trying to keep him calm and keep him from running into the building. It actually took like three of us to stop him from running across, just running back into the building. He wanted us all to go with him. They were like stay here, so we stayed there.

Then everybody composed themselves, and we were back on the corner of -- back on Vesey and West where the staging was, and they were like, "Stay right here. Stay right here. Nobody go towards the building."

All of a sudden we started -- they



wanted us to go towards whatever building that we were going to do triage in the lobby of -- I don't know if it was one or two, but we were supposed to set up a triage there. But they weren't too sure yet. They were waiting for a confirmation or something. We had all our equipment, and everything was already singed from that point.

Like I said, we started ahead like halfway across West Street with our stuff, and the ground started shaking like a train was coming. You looked up, and I guess -- I don't know, it was one that came down first or two? Which one?

Q. The first one to come down was the south tower, number two.

A. Two? We were standing on West Street, and the ground started to shake. You looked up, and it looked like a ticker tape parade off the back of the building, because all this stuff started coming down. We thought it was just like all papers and everything. Like I said, there was pieces of body parts all over the place.

We came halfway across the street, and

the building was coming down. Everybody was running out of the same evac, the building's falling and ESU and everybody and everyone's screaming "Get back! Get back!"

We dropped all our stuff and started running again, west on Vesey, headed towards Vesey and West. Then we went west on Vesey. We just made the turn on I believe on North End Street. Just as we got to the corner, I guess the debris from the cloud came up Vesey and up Murray and then up and over that building that's there. So we actually stood up against the building here.

Q. Vesey and North End?

A. Right, right. The lobby is like right there. They didn't want us to go in the building. Actually everybody -- it was just chaotic. That cloud came, and we just leaned up against the building and it was just -- no one could breathe or anything.

Then after that we -- an ambulance came by from I think it might have been Cabrini's ambulance, and they stopped right in front of that building on North End Street. We all jumped

in the ambulance. Like I say, you could just see the cloud coming up and over the building. We waited and the ground was shaking and all that. We waited like two, three minutes. We got out of that vehicle and proceeded I guess east on Vesey towards the buildings again.

At that point there were -- all the ambulances on the corner there, I believe like the first three or four off that corner were destroyed. We were maybe the seventh or eighth ambulance off the line. So our vehicle was -- we left it running, so it was still running at the time. The windows were open and all that, and a couple windows blew out.

I jumped in the ambulance, and we pulled them on -- we headed westbound and parked them in front of the building there on North End Street. Then I went back and we grabbed Cornell's bus and grabbed like three other vehicles that were all running. I think it was like Cabrini, Cornell and then our ambulance, 429. At that point I didn't know where my partner Mike went, because he went one way and I went the other way.

After that we actually went towards the buildings there, and we were just taking people from -- I guess from right off the front of Trade Center one, all these people, and we would bring them over to the ambulance and they would go. And we would go back to almost the stairs of building one again and just help people straight across the street, and back and forth.

Then everyone was screaming that it's unsafe and everybody had to pull back. Meanwhile everybody was still taking people from -- helping people from the sidewalk in front of the towers across the street almost to Vesey and West, and from there they were going to an ambulance or they actually set up a triage in the American Express building, I believe it was, on the corner there.

We went across to the sidewalk like two, three times, and then when we came back the third time they told us to stay here. We were going to do like -- make that like a forward triage, this American Express building.

It was me and my partner and Steve Pilla and a couple other people from the station.

We had like those multiple oxygen mask trees on like a big tank, and we were just bringing them to only firemen and cops. We didn't have any civilians whatsoever. We had a couple chiefs. Everybody was just like minor cuts. Nobody was life-threatening.

Everyone was hacking, so we actually had like maybe 20 to 30 police and firemen on like the non-re-breathers. I think it was on in the American Express on the corner there.

A few minutes after that, after we had everybody we were treating, they were shipping them down the block. ESU came in and said they thought the gas lines were going to blow for the building or something and we needed to evac out of there immediately.

So we just grabbed all the stuff again and piled them on the stretchers. Actually all the firemen and cops were ripping off their oxygen masks and running out of the building. As we got out the American Express building on the corner there, we started running again westbound, because everybody was just screaming, "It's going to blow! Run, don't walk, and just leave all the

equipment."

I guess the next building came down. Again we were like halfway up the block, and it just came and annihilated the triage area. I believe two other firemen and a cop were killed or something over there or whatever it was.

So after that again we went back to that building on North End and Vesey Street, the building on the corner there. We set up -- they wanted to do it there, set up a forward triage there instead. Again we set up everything again. There's an atrium there, and we had everything underneath the atrium with the glass, we had to move everything over.

After I guess the second building came down and that cloud came again, again nobody could even breathe. We had a line with breathers on in the back of the ambulance because the windows were missing and the cloud was just devastating.

After that then everybody split up. I don't know where Mike, my partner, went. He wound up I believe on the opposite side almost over like at Trinity and Church, because we got

separated. He ran left, and I ran right. He got to the other side.

Then after everything was kind of calmed down a little bit, it must have been after 10:30 then. We were just doing, again, just firemen and police officers. We didn't have any civilians whatsoever. They were all just like respiratory problems and minor cuts. A couple people were kind of critical. So we would take them and throw them in the ambulances.

Then after both buildings were down, we were actually going from right to where the sidewalks used to be and just trying to move things with everyone who was there and put people into ambulances or direct them, throw a gauze pad on their head and tell them to keep walking north on West Street, just keep walking north.

That's really about it. We did that, and then time just passed. The next thing I remember was I guess when the third building came down. We were right in front of -- I don't know if that's a school. We were actually still on Vesey and West but just north of the pedestrian bridge on the corner there. Everybody stood back

right off the point where the water starts. I don't know where that is. Is that right there? Wherever the water is, there's like a little --

Q. This would be the marina behind it.

A. We were here. I thought there was another -- like here where the boats pull in. I don't know if we were all the way over here. They actually had a couple tugboats there.

Q. I know it's just in behind the Winter Garden.

A. Right. On the other side of the building here there's actually -- where's the high school from here, Stuyvesant?

Q. It's further north.

A. When the third building came down, that's where we were. We were actually -- they pulled us all back.

Q. Yeah, Stuyvesant is all the way up here just north of Chambers.

A. They had some boats over here. Actually they pulled us all the way back that far at the point because they didn't want any -- they didn't want us anywhere near it. Everyone was just running around. When the third building



came down, we were on that corner in front of the school, and everybody just stood back.

They pulled us all back at the time, almost about an hour before it, because they were sure -- they knew it was going to come down, but they weren't sure. So they pulled everyone back, and everybody stood there and we actually just waited and just waited and waited until it went down, because it was unsafe. They wouldn't let anyone next to I guess the two piles, we would call them, where one and two was. We stood back. We waited.

Then after the building came down and the dust and everything settled, everybody actually went back. Everybody was just moving things, and we were actually picking up a lot of body parts and putting them in red bags and just having them shipped to the morgue and this and that. We did that for a couple hours, and it started to get dark.

The next thing I remember, I was down -- it must have been about 10:00, and they had like a whole bunch of people from our station were right in front of the school, Stuyvesant,

and they were all holding hands praying. I walked over and slapped them five. I was like, "What are you guys crying -- it's all right, you know, things are going to get better."

They had me, because Mike was on the other side, and I guess at 12 he talked to someone and said "Where's your partner?" They're like, "I don't know. I think he was at -- he was supposed to be --" we were just taking people from the stairs of the building. We weren't going near the lobby. They said it was unsafe. They weren't too sure.

They said, "We think the building's safe, but don't just go anywhere yet." They wanted to do triage in one of the building lobbies, but they said hold off a few minutes and we'll see how it goes, and then things rolled from there.

When we split up, he said, "They told us to go to the lobby." So he thought I was in the lobby of the building at the time. It was about 3:00 that afternoon, and our cell phones finally went on so I called my house. I talked to my wife and told her I was fine.

From there, like I said, I was talking to the guys at the station and Lieutenant Sullivan smacked me in the head and we were laughing. He said, "Thank God you're okay, you moron. We had you down because you were supposed to be in the building." I was joking around with him, saying, "Well, you know it takes a unique person to be a firefighter. I don't run into burning buildings that people are running out of."

When we were there, even my partner, we were like just to watch all those regular people jumping out the windows was -- we saw maybe like 10 or 12 people jump out the windows. That was the thing, when we get to almost the stairs when the buildings were up, we just looked up just to make sure, because you couldn't help but look up, just to make sure everything wasn't coming down.

What else can I say? After they found out at 10:00 that I was okay, I told Lieutenant Sullivan I wanted to go home. He just gave me the keys to an ambulance that was off the corner that was destroyed. I boosted it, and it started up. It was destroyed. I got in, and I drove and

I drove back to the station.

I dropped a fireman off halfway up off the West Side Highway. I dropped him off somewhere. I don't even remember who he was. I dropped him off. Then I came home by myself. I pulled into the garage of Battalion 20. That's when everyone found out I was okay. I was on the missing list and all this.

Supposedly my mother was here at 12. I was on the phone with her at about 10 to 9, 5 to 9, saying I'm on my way down. She works in Brooklyn. Like I said, they were telling us what was happening. So when the phone went dead, she came here to the station from home. It was 12, 12:30.

Whatever transpired here, they said, "Well, we can't get in touch with everybody, but we think everyone's fine," this and that. They're like, "He's not even down there." She's like, "Don't tell me he's not down there. He told me he was in front of it," because we weren't logged onto the computer, so it didn't show that 03 John was there. That's how that started.

Q. What was your partner's last name?

A. Negron, Mike. He doesn't want to talk about it.

Q. Okay. No problem.

When you came out of the Battery Park and coming up West Side Highway, did you park on West Side Highway or --

A. I parked right on Vesey right off West Side Highway. There was maybe one, two, three, four ambulances off the corner, and then, boom, we were the fifth one right there, because we were directly in front of the entrance of the American Express building.

Q. Right. Then you staged down just south --

A. Just south of the bridge.

Q. -- of the bridge, on the west side of the street?

A. Right. Then as people were coming out and were having difficulty coming out down the stairs -- because they really didn't want us to cross the median. That was kind of like, "Guys, just don't cross the median for a few minutes."

Everybody wanted to help, but they

really had it under control. I've been here ten years, and there was a reason for them to tell me to stay there. I pretty much followed the rules.

Q. Right. When you arrived at West and Vesey, do you remember seeing EMS officers down there, other personnel that you recognized?

A. When we came up -- when we were coming north on West Street, we had the windows open. It was so funny, I remember Mike looking out the window going, holy, you know, look at that shit. He was looking out the window, out the passenger window. There were so many vehicles parked from Liberty all the way to Vesey on the north side of West Street, heading north on West Street, that you just couldn't get by.

I always like to leave myself an out. They told me to get to Vesey and West anyway, so that's where I was going. There's like a little island there, a little sidewalk. It must have been just south or actually over here by wherever we came out on Cedar. I came into the southbound lanes, because it was shut down anyway, and just drove all the way up to Vesey and West and backed the ambulance in right there.

So when we came by, we saw all the -- there was a couple I think it might have been like Cabrini and a Metro Care ambulance, a lot of the private ambulances and the fire companies were all right in front of -- right on the north side of West Street there, and we just drove right past all of them, because we were supposed to be on Vesey and West, because you always leave yourself an out.

Q. Yeah.

A. All those vehicles were parked there. I don't remember who it was, but we saw I believe there was Deshore from the academy, from EMS.

Q. Captain Deshore?

A. Captain Deshore. They were heading towards -- everyone was running across in front of us, and we were still going to Vesey and West. It looked like her and a bunch of other EMS workers. There was someone else from -- I believe his last name is Joseph, one of the other new guys here. I thought I saw him go by and one of the medics from the south. I only know his first name is Joe. They were all going towards the site. We were still trying to get to Vesey

and West at the time.

So we just backed the vehicle up there and, like I said, put our equipment in the front. Just as I was ripping tape to put 03 John on the windshield, I guess that's when we heard the turbines or whatever.

Q. The second plane?

A. The second plane per se. We didn't even know it was that until afterwards, until days after.

Q. Right.

A. The people you were with, it was Chris Attanasio and Roland. They were like, "Oh, no, dude, that was" -- the first thing we heard was the plane coming in, because then we were there for the other collapses. I didn't even realize it because it was just chaos and everybody was just scared, to be honest with you.

Like I said, when that blast came out, everybody got this little sing. Even like the little bands on our jackets just melted right off, the reflective bands. We just dropped everything when the cloud came, composed ourselves, and went back to the site again.



Then the rest of the day between whatever, 4 and 10, after I guess the third building went down, they said it was okay. Everybody was really on like the bucket thing and on the pile, just moving debris for a couple hours.

Then when I went to go get a soda, then I was relieved. They sent me home.

Q. After the second hit, you came back pretty much to the same area south of the pedestrian bridge?

A. Yeah, after the second plane hit we ran to North End Street and Vesey and waited until the blast went by, went back to where we originally staged and moved all the ambulances back around the corner. Then we went after that and just with our equipment in the stretchers stood over here and waited because they wanted to keep the vehicles out to the side. They were just like, "Grab whatever equipment you can."

Q. You were back down on West, south of the pedestrian bridge?

A. Yeah, by the bridge. Actually just north of the bridge, because the bridge was

annihilated at that point.

Q. When the treatment area was set up in the American Express building, that was after the first collapse?

A. After the first collapse. We must have been in that building for not even like -- it probably was a while, like 10, 15 minutes, but it just seemed like for a minute or two. I guess the big one's an H tank. We had the multiple trees, and all I did was rip off the non-breathers and people just coming in, just policemen, firemen. We started doing our thing.

Like I said, all of a sudden ESU came in and said the building was unsafe and we needed to get out of that building because they thought that the gas lines were going to go.

From there we moved again back to North End and Vesey in whatever building that was there. That's where we started to do another triage, forward triage thing. There was a little construction there, and the water's right there. So they said, okay, maybe it's not safe there. One building was still up.

What happened was everyone was just

taking vehicles and taking people and heading northbound. We stayed there for a few. It was me and my partner -- not my partner, Steve Pilla and a couple other gentlemen. I don't even remember who they were. Everyone was just throwing equipment into that location from all the other vehicles that were destroyed. They would just salvage the equipment and bring it right to there.

They determined that that was a little too close still, and they wanted us out of that building. We to go north. When the second building was coming down, we must have been like on Murray and North End, and the cloud was coming from the second building. So we actually went back into this one here just to avoid the cloud. Then after that passed, that's when we returned back to actually ground zero or whatever then.

Q. Any thoughts or comments, anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

Q. Okay. I think we covered this, but when you first arrived at staging do you remember the officers that were there?

A. I can't remember his name, but I see him regularly. I believe there was a lieutenant there, a captain, and one of the chiefs was just going by. But I don't even remember who they were. As a matter of fact, I saw him maybe down there another time, and he was like, "I'm glad to see you're okay," and that kind of thing. I don't know him by his name. It's always like, "Hey, what's up," that kind of thing.

Q. Right.

A. That's really about it.

Q. Okay. I thank you.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0749,  
and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110201

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN FELIDI

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. FELIDI

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 9, 2001.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0756 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. John Felidi, Battalion 20, 2985.

Q. Okay. Mr. Felidi is an EMT. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

John, begin with when you were assigned to the job, where you were, et cetera?

A. I was at the station in the morning when we were watching the news and they were showing pictures of what was happening at the World Trade Center, that a plane hit the tower. At that point, Chief Basile came in and said John, take the LSU truck down to the World Trade Center. So, that's what I did. Took the West Side Highway all the way down.

I got to about the West Side Highway, between Barclay and Vesey Street. I couldn't go any further, so I parked the vehicle there and spoke to Chief Villani. I told him I couldn't go any further, due to the mass of emergency vehicles that were down there. So he told me go down, to take the vehicle and put it on the other side of the West Side Highway, which is

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the west -- the west side of the highway there. So I did. I went down to -- took the West Side Highway back to Murray Street, made a left on Murray Street, came up North End, came down Vesey Street and I parked approximately right in this area here, which is the West Side Highway and Vesey Street, right here.

Q. So, right by like 7 World Financial Center?

A. Correct.

Q. The American Express building?

A. Right near there. We were doing some triaging, triaging a couple of patients, here and there. We were ordered to evacuate that area. They didn't give me a reason why. So that's what I did. We pushed down to North End and Vesey. At that point in time we were also doing some triaging. We -- now we are down there. We heard a rumble. I heard the rumble and looked in the back of me all I seen was a monstrous -- I can't even describe it. A cloud. Looked like debris, dust.

We ran down to North End between Murray and Vesey Street. There was a -- I think there is a -- I thought there was a hotel and office building right there. We ran in there. The cloud was really really bad. So we ran in there and we waited until it

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subsided. That was about like 10, 15 minutes went by. I was down there, I lost track of time so I really can't -- even speak about time.

So after that happened, we found out that the second tower that was hit collapsed. We went back out, started triaging again. We asked a fireman that we had, a Captain from one of the -- actually, I don't even know what his name was -- what Battalion or whichever he was at. We were triaging there. There was so much debris down there, like you were covered.

At one point while we were triaging again, we were told to evacuate the area because the other tower was about to collapse. At that point in time I tried to jump in the vehicle and the only thing I remember is getting into the vehicle. I didn't even have time to put the key in the ignition and that was it. That was so -- I mean I think I was closer to that tower than this one.

Q. Yes, number 1. The north tower.

A. Right, that's the one. That it was so dark down there that I couldn't even see in front of me. I tried even moving the vehicle about two feet but I couldn't do it, because people are running everywhere. We had EMS personnel in the middle of the street. We



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had the New York City Police Department running. I seen a couple of firemen running by me, so all I did was get in the vehicle, stay there until -- actually it came to a stand still.

That was about a few minutes. That was a while. The first time I got covered with it. The second time we knew that it was going to collapse. We were told to evacuate the area. That was it. I got into the vehicle, put the key in and I couldn't even go anywhere.

About 15 minutes went by. We started triaging in -- I don't remember, I think the Ambassador or the Embassy.

Q. Embassy?

A. Yes.

Q. Embassy Suites?

A. Right. We started triaging in there and we were getting hit heavy with patients. About -- I'm giving you a rough estimate because I really don't remember the time. About 20 minutes to half an hour went by, we were told to evacuate that area due to major gas leaks in the area. At that point in time I started putting some of the equipment that I had. I left a lot of equipment down there because in the 21

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years I have been there, I have never never seen anything like this. Never.

We were told to evacuate the area and we were told to proceed down North End to Chambers, take the West Side Highway up to Chelsea Piers, 23 Street. At that point in time I think, I picked up Chief Pascale. I put her in the truck and I think there was also a Lieutenant and her aide, because they needed a ride up to the Chelsea Piers. I even seen Dario Gonzalez, Dr. Dario Gonzalez. I seen him down there. I seen numerous people from the Battalion down there.

There was one point in time that we were scared shit. What scared the shit out of me was we were down there and all we heard was another aircraft coming, but it turned out to be, I don't know, an F-15.

Let me tell you something you never seen anybody stand still, because you didn't know where to run, honestly. We evacuated that area and went down to Chelsea Piers. I started setting up a triage area down there and at that point in time I stood there until I was relieved. I came back to the station.

Q. Okay. When you got to west side and Vesey and you saw Chief Villani, do you remember seeing any other people down there that you recognized?

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A. I remember -- after the collapse I remember seeing Chief Basile. He was covered in debris because he was one of the Chiefs that I believe I think was in the pedestrian walkway when it collapsed. Also I saw Louie Cook down there, who was the ALS coordinator next door, in the division. They were covered in -- full of debris.

Q. Do you remember where you saw them?

A. About right here when we were down by triage, in this area.

Q. By North End and Vesey?

A. Yes, the hotel down there.

Q. Yes, that's the Embassy I believe.

A. Yes. In fact I don't remember the name of it. I know it's right here.

Q. All right. Do you recall anybody with Chief Villani when you first arrived?

A. I seen a Lieutenant, but I don't know his name. I really don't know his name.

Q. All right. Other EMS ambulances down in the area?

A. I seen one of the new MERVs from Manhattan. I know it was Manhattan because it was one of the new ones. One of the last ones we got in. I seen people

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getting triaged in the MERV, but I couldn't tell you who they -- what their names or anything like that.

Q. Okay. No problem. Heading up to Chelsea Piers, you picked up Chief Pascale and her aide?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember roughly where you picked them up? Was it somewhere over here on North End or --

A. No, I think it was near West Side Highway. I think around or past Chambers Street.

Q. North of Chambers?

A. Yes. I think -- she was -- as a matter of fact, I seen her when we were triaging in that building. But then after the second collapse, everybody scattered and I didn't see her until -- up in that area. Like Chambers and the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay. When tower one came down you rode that out in the LSU?

A. No, that one, what I did was --

Q. Tower one was the second tower to fall.

A. Right. When the second tower fell I was right here in this area here. I heard the rumble. Sorry, that was the first tower that fell. I heard the rumble. We were in this area here.

Q. Right. West Side Highway and Vesey?

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A. Right. So when that collapsed, I felt a tremor and I ran towards North End, but we had a cloud following us, so I ran around the corner to try to avoid it. It came down Vesey Street. Then it came down also Murray, so I was stuck right in the middle of that area. The only thing I could do was duck and ran into that building, but I got covered in debris because by the time I turned the block here, it caught me.

Q. Right.

A. When the second tower fell, that one we were right here in this area here again. That one was more, like I would say more powerful, because I was closer to it. That one I got full of debris. Also, that was when I jumped into the LSU truck. I didn't get a chance to put the key in, you know.

Because the first time, I believe it was the first tower that fell, the LSU truck was here and I ran. I left the truck. I ran around the corner, but when the second tower fell, I never forget that sound. It sounded like a freight train passing by. I never forget that sound, never forget that sound. Like a freight train.

Q. Okay. Anything else you would like to add, thoughts or comments or anything like that? No?

J. FELIDI

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. John, I thank you very much. The time is now 0708 hours. This interview is concluded.

File No. 9110202

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KEVIN DARNOWSKI

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 9th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0934 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC DARNOWSKI: Paramedic Kevin Darnowski from Battalion 20, shield 3103.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Kevin?

A. Regarding the events of September 11th, 2001, my story is I was dropping my fiancée's son off at school in Brooklyn on Fourth Avenue. After dropping him off, I was heading northbound on Fourth Avenue, and I looked to my left and I see the north tower of the World Trade Center burning. My fiancée works in the north tower on the 98th floor.

At that time I proceeded to call Lieutenant Guzman here at Battalion 20 and question him as to whether or not he had a job in the system for the World Trade Center. He told me that he had reports of a fire on the upper



floors of the World Trade Center.

At that time he asked me if I wanted to continue to work or go down to the scene. I opted to go down to the scene, as I was on my way to work anyway. And in uniform, I opted to go down to the scene at that time.

As I headed down towards the scene, I was trying to call my fiancée in her office, and there was no answer on the phone. It just kept giving me a busy signal. I tried her cell phone, and there was no answer on her cell phone.

I was approaching the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Behind me was EMS Chief Goldfarb. In front of me was a couple of tower ladders and rescue companies and engine companies that were going through the tunnel.

Right before the tolls on the Brooklyn side heading towards Manhattan at the Battery Tunnel, we were sitting in traffic and we watched United Flight 175 hit tower two, which was the south tower of the World Trade Center.

At that time everybody was just in shock. The firefighters and I were just really trying to get through the traffic when the plane

hit, and we were just standing there in like awe of what was happening. Finally we ended up getting into the tunnel, and we ended up sitting in the tunnel for about another 10 minutes, 10 to 15 minutes, trying to get through the traffic.

When we finally got through the tunnel to the other side, I parked my car on the corner of Carlisle and West Side Highway, West Street, and I proceeded northbound on West Street towards the command center or what I believed to be the command center at that time.

I went along the center median, meanwhile looking up at the towers in disbelief and basically sheer awe at what was going on. None of us at the Battery Tunnel knew what was going on until the second plane hit. Right then we knew it was a terrorist attack.

So as I'm walking up to the scene, I see droves of firefighters running towards the buildings, but nobody's coming out on the West Street side. I questioned one Fire Department official -- I believe he was a captain; I don't remember his name -- as to why there was nobody coming out on this side. He told me the Port

Authority had locked the doors on that side of the building and was having everybody come out on the Trinity side by the church, like Trinity and Fulton area for easy evacuation.

At that point I met up with EMS Chief Goldfarb again and his aide Mary. We were over by Three Financial Center. At that point we were standing with numerous amounts of firefighters and fire supervisors and police officers, and we got a report of another incoming airplane. So we proceeded to go into a parking garage that was in Three Financial Center underneath.

Shortly after that we realized what was flying over was the armed forces F-14s flying over, and we got a confirmation from the FAA -- over the police radio we got a confirmation from FAA that all airports had been closed and there were no planes flying within the New York City area at that specific time.

So we all came out of the garage, and Chief Goldfarb started setting up triage on the corner of West and Vesey with the ambulances going towards North End Avenue, facing West Street along Vesey, along Three and four

Financial Center.

At that time we weren't getting that many -- we ended up putting -- I don't know what this building was over here.

Q. Vesey and North End.

A. Yeah, there was a building on the --

Q. Embassy Hotel?

A. It might have been The embassy Hotel.

Q. There's a movie theater also.

A. Right, right. There was a parking lot in the front on West Street. We ended up putting triage initially in Three and Four Financial Center.

At that time Chief Goldfarb and -- I had explained my situation, that my fiancée was up on the 98th floor of tower one and I would be as much help as I can. He told me regarding patient care-wise that don't bother with patient care, just with moving of patients and equipment.

So we went back over to the pedestrian bridge in front of Three Financial Center. We were standing under there with the Fire Department command center. We were attempting to set up a command center there, when one of the

firefighters starts screaming, "Look up!" Everybody looks up, and we were watching the people jump out of One World Tower Center and hitting the overhang in front of World Trade Center where the taxis would let people off originally.

At that time it was just -- the best word to describe it was pure chaos. Nobody really knew what was going on other than the firefighters going in to try to put out the fires.

Chief Goldfarb instructed me to go back to the MERV, which was sitting on West and Vesey. I went back over to the MERV, and I met up with one of my coworkers from Battalion 20, Chris Attanasio. He put me in the MERV, because he knew my situation, and he tried to calm me down and just told me to sit tight and relax and just hope for the best and just things like that. He was trying to calm me down and stuff. I just had to get out of the MERV. I had to be outside on the street watching what was going on.

At that point Chris Attanasio took me and he told me we were ordered by -- he didn't

specify any -- to go over to West Street just south of the north tower right at the base of the hotel over there, because we were getting patients from Two World Trade Center that they were bringing down the stairs from Two World Trade Center down to West Street. We were going to be getting patients over there.

So I proceeded with him and his partner over to that area, and we started loading patients, firefighters and civilians, in the back of the ambulance. At one point we had five patients in the back of the ambulance, and he was standing and he asked me if I wanted to go to the hospital with him. I told him no, I needed to stay in the area. I wanted to see if Chief Goldfarb needed me for anything. So he said okay, and he started to leave. He proceeded down towards like Albany Street, like Liberty and Albany, to go to one of the area hospitals; I don't remember which one.

At that time I started walking back up towards Vesey Street. I heard three explosions, and then we heard like groaning and grinding, and tower two started to come down. To the

firefighters and the cops that I was standing there with started running northbound on West Street and we made a left on Vesey and ran again towards North End Avenue where we were having EMS triage, and we stopped over there.

Down that specific street on West Street, there wasn't that much debris and smoke coming down because Two World Trade Center is more or less blocked by the hotel and a couple other buildings. It did come down like Liberty Street and towards Two World Financial Center and towards like the Winter Garden area.

We ended up just staying there for a while till the smoke more or less cleared up. We started putting our masks on and stuff like that at that time.

Shortly after that Chief Goldfarb told us to go back down towards where we had the ambulances staged on Vesey Street and start moving the ambulances back more and a little north in case tower one fell.

At that time I encountered Chief Larry Mittleman, Chief Fran Pascale, Chief Basile from Division 2, and ALS coordinator Louie Cook from

Division 2. I encountered them all at the EMS triage we had at North End and Vesey.

They were at that point -- Chief Goldfarb explained my situation to them with my fiancée being in tower one, and they were just trying to calm me down. I was helping move patients.

We went back to Vesey and West Street and started moving the ambulances back towards North End more, and then we started going northbound on North End towards Murray Street. We were moving the triage because we got a report of the parking lot in front of the building we were in, some of the cars were on fire, and we got reports of gas lines that were blown and the fire were starting to get to them. So we ended up moving the triage initially, and we just started heading northbound to Murray Street.

We got up to Murray Street, and that's when -- Murray Street and towards West Street we ended up putting the triage just for temporary purposes. Then shortly after that tower one started to come down. Captain Fenton, I believe, was on the scene. He said at that time to just



get in the ambulances and whatever vehicle you could get in and just head northbound on West Street until you get to Chelsea Piers.

That's how the triage ended up at Chelsea Piers. Everybody just started heading northbound. They started -- we were getting over the radio, EMS radio, that they started having the ambulances staging at the Chelsea Piers.

Captain Fenton told a lieutenant from the Bellevue station that was on the scene to take me back to the station, because I could be of no use patient care-wise given my situation. He told him to take me back to Bellevue station. They removed me to Bellevue station.

Just while I was at Bellevue station, I was acting as a liaison between the station itself and the emergency department with a couple of the other lieutenants there. I'd just seeing a couple of the injuries -- I saw the firefighter they brought in in cardiac arrest that was hit by a civilian that jumped out of one of the buildings.

At that point I still didn't know what was going on with my fiancée. I was calling her

sister, calling her mother. Nobody heard anything at that point.

That whole time I had no idea what time of day it was or anything like that. They removed me to Bellevue station at about 3:00. From 3 until 5:30, as I said, I was acting as a liaison between the emergency department and the station.

My twin brother is also a paramedic at Battalion 20. He brought in a patient to Bellevue, so I was talking to him for a while. I went back to the station. I called my house to see if there were any messages on the answering machine, and there was a message from a nurse at Brooklyn hospital saying my fiancée was at Brooklyn Hospital. She was okay. She was being kept for observation.

At that point I called her sister, and her sister was already on her way over to Brooklyn Hospital to see her. So then I approached the desk lieutenant at that time at Bellevue, and I told him the situation. He was going to try to get me a ride back to Brooklyn, but he said obviously it wouldn't be any time

soon since the events were still unfolding down at the World Trade Center.

I explained to my brother what had happened. He said fine. So they just told me to continue what I was doing and they would let me know about a ride over to Brooklyn. So I was continuing acting as a liaison.

At one point I brought the firefighter's equipment that had died back over to the emergency department from the station because his coworkers from the engine company were there requesting his equipment.

While I was standing outside in the emergency ambulance bay, I was talking to my brother and another EMT -- I don't recall his name at this time -- and I started experiencing some chest pain and chest tightness, and I was brought into the emergency room. I was treated for angina and anxiety. I was subsequently admitted to the cardiac care unit over night in Bellevue, and I was released at about 6 in the morning.

Just that's what happened to me on September 11th.

Q. When you got in to Manhattan and you parked down by Carlisle and West, do you recall seeing anyone outside from Chief Goldfarb? Do you recall seeing any other EMS personnel around there that you recognized, or fire personnel?

A. Offhand? Not offhand initially, not down at that time. There was a torso of a human that was down over by the hotel by the front of Liberty Street that they had blocked off, and I saw a couple of police crime scene units there. I saw a couple firefighters; I can't recall their names or what engine or ladder company or battalions they were from. I didn't start seeing EMS people until I got up to West and Vesey Street.

I saw NY Cornell ambulances in front. I saw Long Island College Hospital in front. I saw some Fire Department ambulances in front of the hotel and tower one on West Street. A whole bunch of fire apparatus and police vehicles. I saw what looked like a Fire Department command center. I don't exactly know who was there.

Everybody had their turnout gear on. So at that specific time, it was kind of hard to

differentiate who had white shirt, light blue shirts, you know, who was just wearing turnout coats.

Like I said, I ended up seeing EMS people from up here, Battalion 20, from New York Hospital that I recognized, some names being Craig Viscuti, Chris Attanasio and Roland Diaz from up here at Battalion 20, Joe Fortis and Mike Negrón from up here at Battalion 20. I saw an EMT by the name of Steven Hess. I believe he's from Battalion 57 or the old Woodhall station down in Brooklyn.

At that specific time, I don't remember seeing any EMS lieutenants or captains, just Chief Goldfarb at that time. Other than that, I really couldn't tell you any names.

Q. You've basically covered everything we were looking for. Any thoughts or comments you'd like to add, opinion?

A. No, not really. In that type of situation other than the word "chaos" describing it all, all in all everybody more or less did what they were supposed to do. The firefighters did what they were supposed to do. They were

supposed to go in the building and try to rescue the people from the fire floors, extinguish the fires as best they can. EMS people staging outside, some in the lobbies of tower one and tower two; I knew that.

I mean, other than the chaotic scene that was going on, I would have to say everybody more or less did what an emergency action plan recommends with regards to a mess. Obviously nobody thought the buildings would fall. That was unexpected.

What was expected was firefighters were going to go up to the floors, rescue civilians, as many as they can, extinguish the fires, then we would treat and transport. Basically that was the emergency action plan that was in effect, and was what everybody expected to happen. Nobody expected the towers to fall.

So other than that, basically everybody did what they were supposed to be doing. With the chaos, I'm actually surprised. I was the only one that was actually a little bonkers.

Q. How's your fiancée?

A. She's okay. She's doing good. She's

hanging in there. She hasn't gone back to work yet. Her work actually relocated, but she hasn't gone back to work yet. But that's okay.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 0954, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110203

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LONNIE PENN

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



L. PENN

MR. RADENBERG: Today's date is November 9, 2001. The time is now 0851 hours. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. Conducting an interview with --

A. EMT Penn, first name Lonnie. Shield 1296.

Q. Lonnie is currently assigned to EMS Battalion 20. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Particularly on that day, I was working the unit 20 David, Tour 1, and approximately two minutes after the first plane hit, I was assigned -- basically the route I took was down the Bruckner to the FDR all the way downtown. I must have been around 23 Street when the second plane hit. Shortly, within another 5 to 10 minutes, I was in the mix. I got waved all the way in to the front of the staging. Immediately got out, and proceeded to put on my helmet, pulled out a stretcher and prepared for an MCI.

After that, I helped one lady out of the front of the Marriott entrance, I recall. I was on my way back. I had actually brought her to the Hatzolah ambulance, because they were carrying her, and a few other people and I assisted with her. Then on my way

L. PENN

back to the entrance, I felt the ground shake, I turned around and ran for my life.

I made it as far as the Financial Center, like right before it, behind the last Hatzolah ambulance facing the Trade Center, when the collapse happened, and I mean it was just -- I can't -- it was sheer hell, but hell fire passed me and all the rubble, at least 10 feet of rubble had passed me. The only thing I was really scared of was dying of respiratory distress at that point.

When I got up and looked around, my ambulance was obliterated and gone. I looked for my partner. I didn't see him. I was worried for him. Basically I only saw two other people alive on the block that I was at. I got myself together and then started heading through towards the water and I saw two other co-workers from station 22. We all hugged and I saw Captain DeShore and then a boat came in from New Jersey police harbor patrol and Captain DeShore was ordering us to get on and two of us did and one stayed behind.

While I was in the mix of helping people get on, the second collapse proceeded. We got covered in all of the smoke again, all of a sudden and we just escaped with our lives. It was close, very close.

L. PENN

I just got to say I thank God for living.

Basically that's it.

Q. Okay. Do you remember where you staged?

A. Approximately -- would this line right here be the barrier that was there? There was a barrier in the middle of the street.

Q. Yes, the black line. This is West Street and then the West Side Highway.

A. I was more or less right on this corner.

Q. Right on Liberty and West?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Who was your partner that day?

A. A rookie gentleman by the name of Joseph Henderson or Henderson Joseph. Basically, we got out and we passed a lot of body parts. I mean it looked like Beirut to me. That was from the debris of the two crashes. My rookie partner, he was in shock, he couldn't believe it. He froze. I just you know, I couldn't stop, I couldn't even watch. If you looked up and you see people jumping, we saw a few jumpers. I couldn't look no more. I had to act. I went to the front. That was where I went over to like the Marriott front.

I assisted that lady to the Hatzolah

L. PENN

ambulance and was on my way back when we felt the rumble. My partner actually came sort of like running up to me but not all the way. What should I do. I just said go get a long board from the ambulance and that was the last I saw of him. We felt the ground shake. You could see the towers sway and then it just came down and I never looked back once I started running.

Q. When the collapse started you ran north on the West Side Highway?

A. No, I jumped the barrier and I must have made it right over to where this second line is here. Because I was -- there is like -- it was a little high, I remember where I was it was 10 feet of rubble had passed me.

Q. You were pretty much in front of like 2 World Financial Center?

A. Yes, that's as far as I got.

Q. Right. Then --

A. I actually saw a police officer shoot the window out to get through.

Q. To get through 2 World Financial Center?

A. Yes. Because he was ahead of me. I could see him. He shot the glass out and jumped through and

L. PENN

I had later saw him in the hospital in Jersey.

Q. When you reached the yacht harbor behind 2 Financial, you said Captain DeShore was there and two other people from --

A. Two other EMTs from Boston Road.

Q. Do you know who they were?

A. My friend Conzo and Billy -- I can't pronounce Billy's last name. Truoccolo, yes.

Q. Okay. So you were all pretty much back here for the second collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. At the harbor. Who got on the boat?

A. Captain DeShore. We assisted a fireman that had possibly a broken back. This guy, they already had him on a long board and was carrying him over. I assisted to help get him on the boat. There was about two other police officers and I think two civilian ladies, two ladies, I think they were civilians. We assisted them downstairs into the boat. I came back up and it was me and Conzo, Truoccolo was very hurt, his leg was gashed. He had a load of glass all over him, over his neck. He was cut up. I guess his adrenaline just kept him going.

Q. Right.

L. PENN

A. Basically at that point it was me and Conzo on the deck and Captain DeShore was saying get on this boat and Conzo says to me, are you going to Jersey or what? I said -- I could just hear Captain DeShore screaming out again, get on this boat and then all of a sudden we hear the second collapse coming and that was it. I jumped on it, Conzo stayed and thank God later that night I heard he was okay.

We all got treated very nice as soon as we got to Jersey. The people from Day Tech were the best. The firemen were there, on the other side of Jersey. They hosed me down, all that soot. I was coughing, throwing up. I had soot in my -- my eyes were burning, they were sheer burning. I can't forget that.

When I was running from the first collapse, I must have got hit by a body part because I had carcass like on the side of my leg. It was stuck to my pants. Basically minor injuries as far as back spasm after that and my leg had a bruise. I had a bruise from getting hit from some debris. That's basically it.

Q. Okay. Billy Truocollo got on the boat?

A. Yes.

Q. And Conzo?

L. PENN

A. Stayed.

Q. He stayed back?

A. Yes.

Q. When you arrived at the staging area, do you remember who was there as far as EMS officers, personnel?

A. The last known must have been -- it was a Captain or somebody of ours had a vehicle over here between Albany and Carlyle. There was someone in that vicinity that I recall passing one of my bosses. Otherwise it was strictly Fire Department personnel, fire trucks just waving me in. I had got waved in, I remember I passed this bridge here and I was coming in on this side and then I made this turn, right here was the turn where I made and I parked it right here because I was on that side.

Q. You turned around the barriers, the Jersey barriers?

A. Yes.

Q. By the Marriott and then parked on the east side of West Side Highway so you came up this side on the west side.

A. That's when I got waved to turn.

Q. Turn around.

L. PENN

A. Like I said as soon as I stepped off the ambulance I mean I was just -- I felt like I was in Beirut. All I saw was debris and body parts. I recall a little girl's foot. It was like a pink sneaker. It was tiny, around the age of seven, eight or so, because I have a daughter that size. I mean I just saw so many body parts, it was unbelievable.

Then I look up and see people jumping. Really bugged me out, because I couldn't even watch them land. It was just -- I just couldn't understand jumping. I mean I just couldn't fathom it. I would rather take my chances and ride it out. But these people were like I would rather jump than get burned. That's how I thought of it afterwards. I don't know what else to say.

Q. Anything else you would like to add, opinions or --

A. My opinion was that staging was way too close. I got waved all the way into the front. Where it was unnecessary that personally there was nothing I could do to help anybody from what I saw you know, as far as -- evacuation yes, but that's not my job. So I mean I still assisted in that sense. I just had to act. I couldn't watch these people jump off any more.



L. PENN

I had to do something. That's when I went to the foot of the Marriott entrance and just assisted the first lady I could help. They were all leading them to the Hatzolah. There was a line of like Hatzolah ambulances I recall, at least 4 or 5, and we were helping them.

Q. Okay --

A. That was actually on this side where like two, it was over there.

Q. On the west side?

A. Yes, that's where --

Q. The Hatzolah?

A. Yes, they were faced with their ambulances backed up right there.

Q. Right.

A. So then we had to go -- it was actually by the turn, that's how I remember too. It was by the turn, where I did my turn was across there. We had started walking up over here, me and my partner, I guess we were like right on this corner here.

Q. On Liberty and Washington?

A. Yes, and that's when I saw somebody jump on this side of this 2 World Trade Center on the top on this corner. I saw a man take a leap. I mean I have done a lot of jumpers down, but this one was live in

L. PENN

your face. I must have stopped watching when he got to around the 30th floor. I just put my head down and said lord take care of me and I reacted. That's when my rookie partner, and there was two other medics from Boston that showed up. Joe Jefferson and I forgot his partner, but I heard his partner fractured his shoulder and it was just one bad day.

It was such a beautiful day. Nobody expected this. I had a funny feeling in my gut that once those planes had hit, that the World Trade Center was going to collapse. I had a feeling it was coming down. I just didn't think so quick. It was within minutes.

Q. One last thing. The last time that you saw your partner, he was --

A. He was at the ambulance.

Q. Just prior to the first collapse?

A. Yes, yes. He was getting a long board, he was like what should I do? I said I -- it's like telling a husband and I'm helping his wife give birth like, he don't know --

Q. Go boil the water.

A. I just said go get a long board. That's what he was doing. Basically after the first collapse and I look back to where my ambulance was parked, it was no

L. PENN

longer there. It was gone. I couldn't even see it. It was obliterated. Thank God it was one of the spare vehicles. That's what -- everybody at -- like the bosses, said ah, it's a spare.

I got to thank the New Jersey harbor police. I mean they -- he did a hell of a job getting out of that situation blindly during the second collapse. He got it backed up, did a little bump, hit the wall and then swung it right out. I mean blindly, because you couldn't see anything. The soot was hitting us already from the second collapse. Just covered the boat. Fortunately we made it out of there.

I remember on the boat at that moment, though, I had to grab a fireman on the long board down the stairs. I just hope I didn't hurt him any further, but I just reacted so quickly.

Q. You pulled him down into the cabin of the boat?

A. Yes, he was on the deck and I pulled him down. There was a little bump.

Q. Right.

A. You know, otherwise he would have died of respiratory distress, because he couldn't move. He was definitely temporarily paralyzed from the legs down.

L. PENN

The Jersey City harbor guy didn't realize when he drove in, he tied it up, so during that moment in a split second, I mean this guy did it like a real naval seaman, he spun it and we got out of there.

Him and his partner were frantic. You could see the panic in him when we couldn't see anything in the harbor. All the dust was just covering our faces. My shirt was already gone, because I couldn't even breathe no more from the first collapse. I took it off. Just took my shirt off. It was -- couldn't do nothing for me any more.

I remember I went into the bathroom after I helped the fireman down. I went into the little bathroom cabin and it got full, full of smoke and the soot and what was on my mind then was I just thought, just prayed to God this wasn't chemical warfare also.

When I got to Jersey, like I said, I was throwing up black soot, chunks, chunks. The firemen hosed me down. By then I practically just had my pants tucked in my boots. Oh, man. I don't know what else to say.

Everybody at Day Tech was great. I mean they were there. They had tons of water, food, whatever you wanted. I was just devastated sitting there, watching

L. PENN

you know, it just burn, dying. It was 10 o'clock in the morning and I was on the Jersey side and we're right there watching it burn, I just couldn't believe it.

Sat there for about two hours in shock till a guy came over to me and he don't know me, didn't -- you know, just gave me a hug. It was really a touching moment. He gave me a hug. I didn't expect. Just a lot of support on that side. Then we saw the F 16s coming and fly overhead and stuff like that. Then the Jersey City harbor police did a phenomenal job. Back and forth and we were assisting -- I was helping assist them.

We were all walking people also from -- as soon as they landed from the harbor patrol pier -- the plane, one piece there, helping people get off the boat until about 12:30, when a lady from the hospital came up to me and said you are crazy, you got to go to the hospital already. She said I seen you down here since you got here. You just don't stop. I said all right. I was like you know, I guess my adrenaline was wearing down now.

I finally went to the hospital and I saw Captain DeShore a few hours after and she had a burnt

L. PENN

cornea, something was wrong. We just happened to see each other in line. I mean even at the hospital they were excellent. They treated us like we were -- any complaint. Each one by one, a specialist came over.

It was just one crazy day. I mean I kind of say it's all in a day's work, but that you will never forget. This is a time line in history.

Q. Yes.

A. We all have to endure.

Q. One last question. When you were on the Jersey side, aside from the people that you went over with, after that, the subsequent trips by Jersey harbor, do you remember anybody else from EMS or the Fire Department being brought over before you went to the hospital yourself?

A. Actually no. I don't recall seeing anybody that I particularly knew from EMS. The rest of it was none of our guys. It was other civilians from the area you know, the financial area, and some civilians made it. They were over by the water. After, it just kept going. It kept going back and forth. It was the only way to get out of there. I mean if I could have I would have swam right up the Hudson all the way to Co-op City where I live. I wanted to go home, but I

L. PENN

got to say, what's this guy's name, from the Police Department, New Jersey, what do you call it, the chaplain, he arranged a charter bus for us to get home, me and Captain DeShore. We dropped off people throughout the boroughs, going back once. This was late at night already.

Then you know, we got a police escort. They were really good. I just thank God again for me living. It was a tremendous tragedy. That's about it Paul.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: All right, thank you. Time is now 0916. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110204

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-D CHRISTOPHER ATTANASIO

Interview Date: November 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



## C. ATTANASIO

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 8, 2001.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The time is now 0631 hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Christopher Attanasio, EMT-D, 5303, Battalion 20, Division 2.

Q. This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 20 regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Christopher, start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. We signed on to the KDT approximately about 8:30. At approximately 8:48 or 8:50, the dispatcher came up and said I need whoever wants to go to the World Trade Center, I have something going on. Just switch to Citywide. So my partner and myself switched to Citywide with vehicle 85 and proceeded to go down to the World Trade Center.

We took the FDR Drive south. There was a lot of traffic on the drive going south. We decided to get off on 96 Street, which would cut across to 2nd Avenue and we took 2nd Avenue all the way down.

Upon arrival, towers one and two were both ablaze. The second plane had hit the second tower already. Both towers were totally engulfed. People

## C. ATTANASIO

were jumping out of the buildings. There was airplane fuselage and landing gear around the site. Body parts, victims' remains on the floor. There were some injuries on the street. Some cars were on fire.

I pulled over. I was directed to stage at Liberty and West, where I saw Captain DeShore, Chief Villani, my partner Roland Diaz, 03 John, Joey Fortez, and Mike Negron. Different agencies, voluntary agencies, ESU, Fire Department, Customs, Secret Service, Port Authority people, Hatzolah, and we were staging and Chief Villani had told us to get our equipment out of the vehicle because they were going to go into the first tower that was hit, because they were getting reports of casualties.

So we proceeded to the ambulance, put on our turnout gear, helmet and turnout coat, and as we were taking the equipment out of the ambulance, the second tower -- the second tower, started to come down. As the tower was coming down, we ran. I ran, I guess it was west to the West Side Highway. The tower came down. I grabbed my partner, we ran.

When the tower finally came down, there was a white cloud of smoke that hit us, knocked us to our feet. It was very hard to breathe. We inhaled a lot

C. ATTANASIO

of white powder, whatever it was, dust, concrete, whatever it was.

After the building fell, I remember seeing Chief Pascale, her aide, her name is Immaculada, Gattas is her last name. I remember running with her. Total chaos from the scene. An ESU guy coming out covered from feet, head to toe, bleeding from his head. We treated him. People started just -- we were able to -- after the building fell we went back and rescued our ambulance. Vehicle 85, which had been struck with pieces of the building, had a broken left mirror, broken windshield, debris on it. We cleared it off.

We went back to where they were staging by Battery City and we went back, I went back to the tower that had come down, but a gentleman from OEM, who is a black male, that's all I remember, a very big black male, he had told us that his boss was in the building. We proceeded to go back to the tower that was already down and when we pulled up, we saw burnt vehicles, fire balls, smoke, debris, dust, bodies.

When we went in front of the tower, I remember a Chief saying on his bull horn, all Fire Department personnel, abandon your vehicles. I looked up, tower one was still burning, but tower two was

C. ATTANASIO

already down. I told my partner Roland Diaz, and I had another paramedic in the back, Darnowski, Steve Darnowski, was in the back of vehicle 85. As we looked around, we saw nobody. It was a ghost town, everybody had left.

I put the vehicle in reverse, people started coming out of the woodwork. We had an injured firemen, we had a lady, a guy having a heart attack. We had another fireman with an avulsed face. We had some paraplegic lady that they had carried down, all the way down, and they left her on the street, but she wasn't injured. She just needed transportation out of the site.

We had a total of 13 patients in the back of the ambulance, ranging from cuts and burns and scrapes and bruises, to some lady having -- she was having an MI, blunt trauma, a lot of people with difficulty breathing, so we notified the dispatcher. I was 3 Ida that day, that we had injuries in front of tower two and asked for direction on what hospital to go to.

The dispatcher came back and replied take your patients to Columbia Presbyterian. I acknowledged and as I was leaving the site I picked up a rider, some gentleman that just wanted to get out of this. I put

C. ATTANASIO

him in the front of the bus. As we are going up the highway, as we are going up 9 West or whatever you want to call it, the patient's condition started getting worse in the back, the fireman, he was really bleeding now, so we diverted him over to hospital 19, which is St. Clare's.

When we got there, we were met by several EMTs, who took very good care of us and took all the patients out. We restocked the bus and went back down to Ground Zero. We just went past Chelsea Piers. We had gotten a couple of more patients and took them to Beekman Hospital. Same thing, cuts, bruises, scrapes, respiratory problems.

After coming out of Beekman Hospital, we reported to the Chelsea Piers. Basically that's the best of my knowledge that I can remember.

Q. Okay. When you got down, coming down Second Avenue, when you got into the neighborhood of the Trade Center complex, do you remember what route you took to get to Liberty and West?

A. Right. I definitely went right by City Hall, right where J and R Records is, and I cut across. I was following another EMS ambulance who knew Manhattan, because he was zipping in and out, so I was just

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following him. I was directed when I came, I came all the way around, and I cut this way.

Q. Again, down Church and Liberty?

A. Church, and I guess I'm making a right on Liberty, and these are where the busses were, on this side.

Q. Liberty and Washington roughly and the West Side Highway?

A. Right, right.

Q. Do you remember what the number on the vehicle you were following by any chance?

A. No, I don't.

Q. There wasn't anybody following --

A. FDNY.

Q. But it wasn't from Battalion 20?

A. Negative.

Q. When you got to Liberty and West, you said you saw Captain DeShore. Chief Villani was down here?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. At the site?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Do you remember seeing any other EMS personnel or officers down there?

A. Officers, no.

## C. ATTANASIO

Q. Any fire personnel, Fire Department personnel that you recognized?

A. Joe Truocola, he works 18 Charlie, tour 2. He got injured, I think he works out of Boston. 22. I'm not sure. Who else did I see down there. I can't remember.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't remember. I don't remember. Just my partner Roland Diaz, Joey Fortez I remember seeing. Mike Negron. Chief Pascale. Oh, Steve Pillar. I saw Steve Pillar too.

Q. He is the ALS coordinator?

A. Coordinator for Division 6.

Q. Okay. When tower number two started coming down, you said you ran west across the West Side Highway?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where you wound up in that area?

A. It was right before Battery City. It was right -- let's see -- I ran this way. We ran all the way. I couldn't tell you. I don't remember. I just -- it was -- I couldn't recognize anything, the wave of white. I couldn't see. I don't remember.

## C. ATTANASIO

Q. Okay.

A. I don't remember.

Q. No problem. You said you had come back after the dust settled a little bit?

A. We went back to get the ambulance.

Q. To get your vehicle?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where you moved the vehicle to at that point?

A. The vehicles were staged on Liberty, so we went to West Street, where I picked up that gentleman I told you. We went back, because he said, he worked for OEM. I remember that much. I remember that. We went back and I don't, you know --

Q. You got out somewhere on to West Street, West Side Highway and then --

A. After getting the vehicles and going back to the downed tower and coming back I had proceeded north on West Street, on the West Side Highway. I know that's how I got to the hospital.

Q. Okay. Do you remember approximately when you came out of St. Clare's the first trip?

A. What time?

Q. Do you remember approximately or do you know



C. ATTANASIO

at that point had the second tower --

A. Had fallen.

Q. Tower one had come down?

A. Tower one? To what I believe, I believe that while I was in the hospital, that's when the second tower fell. I wasn't there for the second tower. I had already picked up injuries from tower two, which was the first tower that fell. That's how I would have to believe it. Because I never saw the second tower fall. I never saw it. I only saw the first tower fall.

Q. When you came back from St. Clare's back down to the site, did you come down the West Side Highway?

A. I went all the way down the West Side Highway and I made a left. I just cut across and I was just following some emergency vehicles. I think it was ESU or Port Authority ESU, and I just went back and we just picked up some more patients. There were just patients everywhere.

Q. Do you remember where in the area you got to?

A. I think it was down as close as maybe Church and Rector, if that's possible. Maybe. We just -- we were getting flagged down by people and we were just piling them in the ambulance. There was no -- we

C. ATTANASIO

weren't told. We were just coming back. As we were coming back down, I think I made a left and cut across somewhere, and we just started getting flagged by people walking that were covered in debris during the towers.

Q. Okay. Any thoughts or comments you would like to add?

A. Thoughts and comments? No, I was just -- I just -- you know. I have been through a lot of stuff in my own personal life, but I never seen anything like that. I am a Persian Gulf War veteran and I have never seen anything like this before in my life, and I still to this day can't believe it. I just can't believe it, that it happened. Basically that's all.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Time is now 0644 hours. The interview is concluded. Thank you Chris. Point of correction. This interview is conducted November 9, Friday. The time is correct.

File No. 9110209

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-P KATHY ZARR

Interview Date: November 27, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is November 27th, 2001. I'm Paul Radenberg with the Fire Department, City of New York. The time is now 0656 hours. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT ZARR: Kathryn Zarr, paramedic, Battalion 22, Station 52.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present for the interview is --

MR. SAMOJEDNY: Eugene Samojedny, Fire Department, City of New York.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted at EMS Battalion 22.

Q. Kathy, if you can start from when you were assigned to the job.

A. We're stationed out here in Staten Island, and when the first plane hit they mobilized some of the units to go out to Manhattan. I guess that's part of their preplan for MCIs.

While we were in the tunnel on the way there, the second plane had hit, and we didn't

know it until we pulled out of the tunnel and somebody had advised us later on that the second plane hit.

They told us to put our vehicle on Liberty Avenue right by West Street, right on the corner there, and set up a secondary triage area because they were expecting burn patients and everything else. So we parked our vehicle, and behind the building there was an alcove. We set up all of our equipment as far as a triage area.

So after that was done, we were just hanging out, waiting to see what was going to happen next or when we were going to get any patients.

I know Chief Grant was there from Battalion 22 on that corner with us. His aide was there. There was some units also here from Staten Island, but they were the voluntary units. I think one was from Bayley Seton and one from St. Vincent's, I believe, and a Richmond County ambulance, one of the private ambulettes out here. For some reason they sent a truck up there as well.

Once that was done, like I said, we

were just hanging out, not really doing much of anything. We were watching the buildings and watching the people jumping from the buildings. The next thing you know, we heard this rumble, we looked up and tower two was coming down.

We were able to run maybe half a block before we got overtaken by the debris cloud. I lost my partner and most of the other people there, and I got thrown into one of the alcoves of the building from the wave.

After a few minutes of hanging out in blackness, I figured I had to start walking to try to get at least oriented. I found a fireman. He was nice enough to give me a couple hits off a Scott pack to try to get some air at least. I don't know if you were there during any of this.

Q. No, not that morning.

A. It was like breathing sand. You couldn't catch a breath at all.

Once I got that, I turned around, found my ambulance again. I had to turn back, and you actually had to be on top of the truck before you could actually see any of the numbers. That's how black it was. You couldn't see your hand in

front of your face.

I took all the respirator masks we have M-95s. I took them all out of the truck, put one on myself and just went back out and trying to find everybody again and just pass them out to whomever you could find.

I found one captain. I don't remember her name. I started finding the people that we went down there with. Just handed out whoever didn't have a mask, handed out masks. As we were trying to find out equipment, get everything reorganized again, the next tower came down.

We got overcome by the debris cloud again, wound up at the end of -- I'm not sure if it's West End Street where the water hits it. I wound up down there with a whole bunch of civilians. I took out whatever O2 tanks we had from the truck, put it inside one of the buildings that they opened up for us, and just started treating the asthmatics or whatever else found their way down there.

Then they evacuated the area because of the gas leak, and they started dumping everybody on harbor boats.

Q. Right.

A. Well, they wanted to take us over to Jersey. I knew there was a triage area over in Manhattan, the ferry.

Q. Right, Battery Park.

A. Yeah. My brother happens to be a harbor pilot, so the guy was nice enough to transport me to the ferry instead of to Jersey.

So we made our way over there with whatever O2 tanks we could carry, and I wound up over at the south ferry, treating whoever came in over there. I don't remember what time I got there. It was well after the second collapse and after they started evacuating people for some sort of gas leak.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Mark Harris.

Q. Mark Harris.

When you went into Manhattan, you said you went through the tunnel. You went through the Battery Tunnel?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember how you came up?

A. We made a right-hand turn, and all you



saw was airplane parts and body parts in the street.

Q. You were coming up north on West Side Highway?

A. Yes. We made a left onto Liberty, and we ended up I believe it was right here, because I remember the street that we were on. They parked us on the corner on Liberty, but I remember the street we were on. We drove down the street to get away from anything else that might have happened as far as the debris cloud and stuff. It was a dead end. We drove ourselves into a dead end, and that's where the water was.

Q. Okay. That was probably coming down here South End Avenue?

A. Yeah.

Q. So your staging area was on Liberty between West and South?

A. Right.

Q. You said you had seen Chief Grant.

A. And his aide Mary.

Q. And his aide. Do you remember seeing any other EMS personnel at that triage area?

A. Yeah, but I don't know who they were. They left me to set up the area while they were doing other things, because it was a secondary area and they knew they had another one set up I think in front of the building or in the lobby of the building itself. So what they were going to do was use us as the secondary point. So they left me with --

MR. RADENBERG: The interview is paused.

(Interruption.)

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0827 hours. We are resuming the interview. All parties indicated at the beginning of the tape are present.

Q. So triage was here on Liberty between South End and West. When the tower collapsed or the first tower two collapsed, do you remember which way you went at that point, who was with you?

A. I had one of the girls from Richmond County ambulance with me. Where everybody else went, I have no idea. Everybody just started scattering. I had to stop because she had

fallen. I picked her up. As I did that, that cloud just came around the corner. So I think we were running on End Avenue. Which end?

Q. That's South End.

A. South End. We were running this way.

Q. South.

A. Right. I made it not even half a block before that cloud caught up. She wound up diving under a city bus, and there was an alcove. The pressure of the cloud pushed me into the alcove. So that's where I wound up.

Q. Do you have any idea where your partner was at this point?

A. None whatsoever. None whatsoever.

Q. When you first arrived on the scene and was setting up the triage area, was he still --

A. Yeah, he was driving that day, so he was positioning the ambulance and stuff while I was positioning all the equipment. I guess I had most of the techs from the different trucks, whatever the techs were that day. We were all setting up inside with the chairs and stuff. We were trying to set up in case we got a lot of patients and stuff.

Q. So basically as far as you know through the first collapse Mark was still at the vehicle?

A. Yeah, I had no idea where he was after that first collapse. I had no idea where he went. After the collapse, like I said, it took a minute for me to find where everything was. But I went back to the vehicle to get those masks, and there was nobody there. The back door of the vehicle, it was open. So there was like soot and debris and stuff all inside the truck and everything else.

But I had no idea where he was. It took a while for the dust to settle, literally for the dust to settle, for us to even see and to try to find everybody. After a while I did find him and see him and then lost him again when the second collapse happened.

Q. In between the two collapses when you found him, where were you?

A. Trying to find all our equipment. We were back to where --

Q. Back at triage?

A. Back to where the triage was. We went back to try to find all the equipment. Because

the first building came down, I didn't think the second one is going to come down. I don't know why we didn't think so. I guess we didn't want to believe it would come down.

We were trying to find everything to reset everything up, because now definitely there are going to be a lot of people hurt.

Q. Right.

So you found Mark back at the triage area. Was he injured at all?

A. No. None of us were. None of us were, which was a surprise. It felt like I had a sunburn. It looked like I had a sunburn from all the cuts, just the force of --

Q. The dust?

A. -- the dust and stuff. You felt like you had glass all over you. Everything was all itchy and stuff. It must have been whatever was in the cloud.

Q. Now, when the second building came down, do you remember which -- I guess you and Mark split up again or?

A. No, he jumped into the vehicle. He had a fireman with him in the back of the truck,

trying to get the vehicle out of there. We caught him just before we took off with the vehicle.

So I had somebody else who had escaped, one of the guys who had escaped from the first collapse. He worked in that building. He was also -- I teach EMTs out here on the island. He was one of my students, so I knew he was an EMT. He wanted to help. I said, "Okay. Stay with me. I don't know what's going to go on." He got into the back of the truck, and we ended up down by that water.

Q. This way?

A. Yeah, down here, which was only like two or three blocks. I didn't even realize it was a dead end. That's how much I know Manhattan. We ended up down at the end of the dead end.

Q. The south end of South End Avenue at South Cove Park is where it dead ends.

Mark was with you? He was driving the truck at that point?

A. Right there, yeah. At that point he was there.

The cloud caught up to us. There was no getting away from that. But I took whatever oxygen tanks we had there, and there was a building that they had, they were doing construction on one of the buildings, and the guy opened it up.

So all of the civilians and stuff that had congregated around there went into the building, whatever had to have their eyes washed. The guy was very nice. He just opened everything up for everybody. We threw some oxygen tanks in there. We had a couple of asthmatics that were having asthma attacks. We were treating them with whatever equipment we had left.

Then they started evacuating everybody because of a gas leak, and that's where I totally lost Mark and I don't know where he went. It was just weird.

Q. So it was from this area, from South Cove --

A. South Cove.

Q. -- that you got on the boat?

A. I got on the boat on the Manhattan side of the ferry terminal where the triage and

treatment area was.

Q. The firefighter that was in the back of the truck -- there was a firefighter with Mark?

A. Yeah.

Q. But you don't know who he was or what company or anything like that?

A. No, no.

Q. When you made your way down here to South Cove now, do you recall, aside from you and Mark, any other EMS personnel being down there?

A. Yes. There was a Staten Island University Hospital ambulance there. It was Mitch Powell and Danny Frazier. They emptied out their O2 tanks and gave them to me too. Like I said, we only had the two that were left from the truck because all our gear is buried now wherever the treatment area was all the way down by the towers. So they gave us whatever they had to try to help us out, and they were there. I don't know what happened to them after that.

Q. Going back a little bit, before you got the job, you had mentioned a female captain. EMS captain?

A. EMS captain.



Q. PD?

A. It was a female EMS captain. She was in that area. I don't remember her name.

Q. That was at the triage area when you first got there?

A. Yes, when I first got there and after the first collapse I saw her. I didn't see her after the second collapse. I didn't see anybody after the second collapse.

Q. Do you remember what she looked like at all?

A. I just saw her again too, and I don't remember her name. I'm bad with names. I don't remember her name. She was a blonde, I guess in her forties.

Q. Captain Deshore?

A. That's it. She was just at that function in Manhattan at the hotel.

Q. That's pretty much if for questions I have at this point. Anything else would like to add? Opinions? Comments? Anything of that nature?

A. There's no comment. I don't know what to say about this.

When did you guys start doing the interviews? Just recently you started with all this?

Q. A couple weeks ago.

A. Because I've only been back to work for two weeks.

Q. Yeah. A couple of weeks ago we started, probably about a month, actually, maybe a month and a half.

A. Yeah, because I was out sick. I was out sick for two months.

Q. Actually the beginning of October, somewhere around there.

A. I didn't come back to work for about two weeks.

Anything else?

Q. No, no.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 0837, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110213

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT LINDA MCCARTHY

Interview Date: November 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

L. McCARTHY

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is November 28, 2001. I'm George Cundari, working with Murray Murad. The time is 12 noon. We are here interviewing Linda McCarthy.

Q. Please state your name, rank and command for us.

A. My full name is Linda McNer McCarthy. That's my legal name. My shield is 2259. I'm an EMT and I work for communications as a dispatcher.

Q. Linda, can you please tell us what happened in the events of that tragic day of September 11.

A. Well, I had finished up my 16 hour shift at communications at approximately 8 o'clock in the morning. Then I went outside, said good-bye to some people, got a coffee from I guess the local little -- I always get a little coffee in the shed, the little hut they have there. I went over to Flatbush Avenue where my van was parked.

Now I don't normally go home when I'm doing mutuels. I stay in the city with a friend or wherever. Go over to my old station or wherever. So this day I was heading up to East 9 Street in Manhattan to park my van, alternate side of the street parking, and then figure out what I was going to do for the

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afternoon.

I got there probably -- must have been about 9, in the area, maybe quarter to nine or 20 to nine. I'm not quite sure when, but I didn't notice any -- first I see the first tower was 8:48. I didn't see that going on coming over the Manhattan Bridge, so maybe it hadn't happened yet. I think I would have noticed it.

Q. You were going to Manhattan?

A. No, I was probably in Manhattan at that point, coming up Allen or whatever comes off the Manhattan Bridge, up to 9 Street and First Avenue. I parked my van and I puttered around and was waiting, you know, you can't just leave your car parked. I heard a boom. I said gee, that's a pretty loud manhole cover. I saw people on the corner looking up. I said that was pretty close. I can't really leave my van there. You are not supposed to leave it until you have moved it back to the empty side, whatever.

So I went down anyway. I saw the smoke. I said that looks like the World Trade Center area. Someone said that is the World Trade Center, a second plane just hit. I said oh, my god. I was still in uniform. I said I have to go. I have to go down

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there. I parked the van on the -- where you are not supposed to park it until 10:30, 10 o'clock. They move it over. I just parked it and I said I'm going down. I just said oh, if they give me a ticket they give me a ticket. I'm going towards Second Avenue. Maybe I will get a cab or something.

I hitched a ride with a Beth Israel ambulance. The people on it I didn't recognize. I know LoriAnn Wienerman. I know different people. No, that's -- Beth Israel is 4 Charlie, but I didn't recognize these people. They weren't the young guys I see sitting by Tompkin's Square Park once in a while in 14, I think it is, 14.

I hitched a ride and a Firefighter jumped on too, still putting on his gear coming off duty. They drove us down there to Church.

Q. You can use the diagram to --

A. We climbed down off their ambulance at Barclay, yes, Barclay and that's not West, West Broadway, and ran down towards West Street. I don't know where the Firefighter went. He went off into the crowd, but we ran together down there. I stopped on the corner of West and Vesey. I looked at the burning buildings. I said I just have my uniform, my helmet

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and my outer coat, you know the one with the shiny reflector. I said I don't even know where triage is in those two buildings. I wouldn't know where to go.

But I remember the last bomb when I was an office aide at Woodhull, before I became an EMT, I put on my little buff coat and went down and there was right across the street a triage. I said I'm going there, because I know there is probably going to be a triage.

Q. Upon your arrival did you see a lot of injuries, a lot of people coming up to you, was there a lot of activity going on around you, a lot of ambulances?

A. I was on the side street and I did see a lot of ambulances parked up on Barclay, when we ran down Barclay, a lot of -- parked at angles, but like Hunter and -- you know, different. It wasn't all FDs parked there. Right away. I saw people injured but not severely injured coming towards me and around there people were taking care of them.

There was a lot of bustling right there on that corner. I just had tunnel vision. I said I have to get to where I can get some equipment, so I went straight there into this building, which is 3 World

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Trade Center. Right in the front door.

Q. By the Winter Garden?

A. Yes, right to the right of the Winter Garden. Right there in the front, there was a triage and I said I'm here off duty. I wanted to check in. First of all I wanted someone to know I was there and I wanted to be able to get an oxygen tank or a stair chair or something to help.

Some people were out front writing a sign. I guess they were putting triage or something. I heard within 3 minutes or something, this rumbling. Someone said the building is going to come down.

Q. Could you see the towers where you were? Were you able to see the towers?

A. I was right across the street from the towers. I couldn't see two, the south tower, very well. It was kind of blocked by one. Do you see like that?

Q. Uh-huh.

A. So when that one went down. I thought the plane was exploding, or another plane hit. I had no idea it was coming down. But I couldn't see it gone, because I couldn't see it really in the first place with all the smoke. But I saw debris flying at me like



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a hurricane. So I didn't know what it was. I heard like an earthquake. I said run for your lives, run.

Everyone that was around me looked up and we all just immediately ran into the building. We were running through the hallways, afraid that whatever it was was going to blow through the windows and blow down the hall. I mean we didn't know (inaudible).

Q. Who was in the command post at this point?

A. Nobody that I worked with before.

Q. No Chiefs, nobody?

A. Chief, but there was no Lieutenant at that point. There were EMTs and paramedics right there. Because I was looking for one. Where is the Lieutenant? They said well, he's not here right here this minute. I'm like okay. What do I do. Count 4 by 4s. No, you just kind of like see what's around and see what you can do with it. Until someone gives me direction I didn't know where they wanted us to go.

So we ran through and we came out the side right here. There was -- oh, once I saw it wasn't flying through the glass at us, we had run down the hallway, I saw some people coming from the stairway, so I just kind of stood in front of the stairway and said to the right, to the right. I was like totally

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petrified, but I was directing them around to the right to where the door was that we were all going out.

So there was a lot of people -- obviously there was a triage on the second floor in the front. They were coming down and this was about 20 people. So I took them out the side.

Q. When you said they, what do you mean, civilians or --

A. Civilians and EMTs. We had a triage on the second floor too. Then it turns out the door right here was open, but maybe it was better they were inside for the extra 3 minutes they were walking, because they were breathing fresh air, because when they got outside it was like snowing.

But the initial 5 pounds of stuff that came down, 5 inches or -- that was only -- they had a few extra minutes of breathing in the air that was inside. Then I was walking around here, Vesey and West. I had a stair chair, an oxygen tank and one mask. I had a little respirator I had put on. I was wearing my helmet. I was just kind of walking around, looking for patients to direct them up Vesey towards the river.

I don't know what happened here, but I just knew -- like I saw my friend Pedro, who is a cop at the

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9th precinct, covered in dust. Covered-- Velasquez, Officer Pedro Velasquez. He had a partner in there too, somewhere that he was, somewhere near him, but it wasn't -- he just asked me where do I go. I said wherever you go, don't go towards those buildings. Stay away.

He said okay, so I think he wandered up that way, but you know, there was so many people running and I didn't keep in touch, so I was up here. I had a bunch of firefighters on the floor. I was cleaning their eyes with -- I had wheeled someone up to, you know -- someone else took over the 225 pounds of patient, going up this hill in this thick stuff.

Q. Just speak a little louder.

A. Okay. Then I was helping some firefighters rinse their eyes on the corner when I heard the next rumble. I said oh, it's happening again. I don't know what is happening. Run, run, run. So we all ran right in front of -- there is a building here.

Q. North End Street that you are pointing to?

A. Yes, there was a building but it's not there. That's what we ran into, this building, but we stood outside for a while, because there was a lady outside whose pacemaker kept kicking out, kicking off.

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She said I have to go that way. She is pointing towards north, towards the school, the high school, and there is a big cloud of something coming around. I said Miss, I don't think so. You won't be able to breathe. In one minute that cloud is going to hit us, wrap us up where we are now. We should go right inside, don't you think. She said okay.

So we went right in the lobby here and other people came in and then they started -- then it was enveloped with this next cloud of smoke, debris and dust. But they started bringing in patients. That lobby, for us, became a triage area away from the front site. I don't remember names, but we had some triage tags, so I was -- eventually when we got all these people on the oxygen trees. They brought the 10 and 12 oxygen hook ups to it. Some people in them, some people rinsing eyes. We had a fire Chief in there with a shoulder and a leg injury. We had a journalist, who had -- I don't know, I can't remember whether -- maybe it was an ankle injury and a civilian that was helping her. A lot of firefighters and police officers. Maybe about 22 patients in there at one point.

Then they said the building is going to blow, the gas line. So everyone has to move on. They said

L. McCARTHY

anyone that can walk has to walk, so these people (inaudible) got up, they were walking, we had to wheel the fire Chief. They were going this way, and we had one man that kept fainting. He said he had escaped being killed and the Firefighter next to him had died, was killed. He wasn't hit or anything, but he was, I guess it was psychogenic shock, because he kept -- even lying down he was fainting. He was syncopizing.

I ended up with just him on a stretcher, with him on an oxygen tank, nobody else, everyone was going forward and piling equipment on stretchers and giving oxygen trees to try and get more and they wheeled the fire Chief away and I had this one young man that just kept going in and out. I said I have to get him to the hospital. He won't last going up. I don't know what's going to happen to him.

So I called out to a paramedic from Cabrini. His name is Slice. I don't know what his real name is. I said Slice can you help, he said what's going on. I said I'm pushing this guy through this thick stuff. I don't have any help. We need to get him to a hospital. Can you help me. He said sure, I will drive, you tech, we will get him to a hospital. So we jumped in -- he had lost his partner in the commotion.

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He didn't know where his partner -- his partner is Andy, big guy. Andy was lost, but this man kept fainting. I said please, I don't know what's going on with him.

So we took him and another patient we picked up on the way to Long Island College Hospital. I saw thousands of people walking across. I was busy tending when we were in the -- but coming back, I saw thousands with arm injuries and nothing like life threatening right there, but totally bewildered coming over the bridge. That was cool the way you just went across the bridge. I would have gone to St. Vinny's, the places I know, but it was right there. He said well, yes, that was the closest at that point.

We went back to the scene and we picked up two more, two Port Authority police officers that had been in the mall area directing people. It had been an hour, hour and a half since they -- but it took them an hour to get out. One had an arterial bleed on his arm. That was, you know, controlled or whatever. The other one was, I can't remember his injuries, but we took them to St. Vincent's.

Q. Just a question for you. You started with the rumbling. Did you actually see the north tower

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come down?

A. All I saw was -- so much debris was just obscuring my view of the north tower. No. The north tower, I was up here, the second one, right?

Q. Right.

A. I was up at Vesey and I didn't even look up. I know it was the scariest thing. It was like an earthquake and I didn't take the time to look up to see it, because I saw all this debris again. I just said run, run. People were saying people are jumping. Well this little building on the end was obscuring my view at one point from the people jumping.

Once I saw a little something hanging over the side and it looked like a foot, but that's not something I wanted to see. But this building here actually obscured my vision from people jumping, because of the angle I was. It's an 8 story building. It's not a small building, so it was between the fire and that, I hadn't seen (inaudible).

Q. I'm sure it was a very long day for you that day.

A. Right. That's all I did. Around 11 o'clock is probably when we ended up taking the patients up to -- I stayed there all day and all evening too. That's

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when we took the patients to St. Vincent's, the two Port Authority police officers. I guess that would be around 11, I'm not sure, approximately. He did find his partner, up at 23rd Street, Chelsea Piers.

Q. Did you ever notify anybody that you were actually operating on the scene that day finally at some point?

A. Yes, I did talk with Sammy, who works with Chief Diggs. This was in the afternoon though when I was trying to get back to do a mutual tour at 4 o'clock. Sammy made said no, you have been here all day, stay here and this will become a straight tour, so the next two tours became straight time for me, so I didn't do a tour 3 and a tour 1 the next night. I just did an all day tour 2 and tour 3 and went home or did what I did.

MR. CUNDARI: All right. Thank you for keeping this time for this interview. This concludes the interview. It is 1220. Thank you very much.



File No. 9110214

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROGER MOORE

Interview Date: November 29, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. MURAD: Today is November 29, 2001. The time now is 1410 hours, and my name is Murray Murad of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

LIEUTENANT MOORE: Lieutenant ROGER MOORE of EMS Division 5.

MR. MURAD: This is regarding the events on September 11, 2001, and this interview is being conducted in the home of Lieutenant ROGER MOORE at 146 Sharet Road on Staten Island.

BY MR. MURAD:

Q. Lieutenant Moore, can you give us your events perspective on that day?

A. At that point, at approximately just five minutes before the job originally came in, we were all at the academy for a refresher, and I was with Chief Randy Hirth and Grace Cacciola, lieutenant. We had heard that there was something going on. It came over our pagers that it was a plane.

We went into the administration wing of the academy. Someone had a television on, and we saw it, and we said we should probably go. Chief Hirth was, like, why don't you come with me, because they are probably going to bring everybody from the academy

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anyway, and this way they can use you, and we proceeded to get into his car and responded to the scene.

We went down the LIE through the Midtown Tunnel and up onto the west -- no, east side drive. FDR Drive, excuse me. At that point at 42nd Street the police had closed off, so we had to -- a free ride all the way down and could get a bird's eye view.

The second plane had just hit. We continued on, pulled up by -- came up West Street and stopped at the tunnel exit to the Lincoln -- to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We figured that would be the best place to park, because there were so many trucks we didn't want to get blocked in, and a lot of emergency apparatus still responding, so we parked there.

I got a helmet from his trunk and proceeded to walk to the command post, which was located at West and Vesey Street. While we were walking, we noticed three blocks away from the Trade Center that there were body parts scattered all over the roadway, and that there were police officers trying to safeguard the body pieces.

Q. Were they civilians or you think they were from the aircraft?

A. Unknown.

ROGER MOORE

Q. You don't know?

A. I mean, you really had to look to see these -- these looked like hunks of meat. People were torn apart, so we decided to go across the street on the water side and continued up to the command post.

Q. Which was located where?

A. At West and Vesey, the EMS command post. I reported -- the chief, myself, and Grace reported to Chief Gombo, who was in charge of the command post. They had given Chief Gombo -- Chief Gombo had given Chief Hirth an assignment, and they took off.

I was waiting for my assignment. Chief Nigro came over and was talking, along with First Commissioner Feehan, and a few minutes went by. They said, "We are going to give you an assignment." I said, "Okay, I'm here ready to go." The next thing I know, I heard Chief Nigro yell, "Look out, look up."

We all looked up, and the building was on its way down, so we immediately dropped what we were doing and proceeded to run towards the water. That was -- there was a loading dock from the American Express building about 40 feet away.

As we were running, I managed to trip just outside of the loading dock and came down on the ground

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and hit the curb, taking out my knees and my left elbow. I was now trying to crawl with one arm. I managed to roll a little bit, and a fireman grabbed and pulled me in. At the same time Lieutenant -- Captain Sickles landed on top of me, but at this time -- and the building was now hitting the ground outside --directly outside.

Essentially, I thought I wasn't in far enough, but at that point, you know, it was -- you couldn't see any more. It was a black, black night, and dust, and dirt and everybody was choking.

After approximately ten minutes went by, you could start to see flashlights and people starting to talk and moving around. They came over to me, and asked, you know, let me help you up, and I couldn't get up. Both legs and the arm were shot. I figured they were broken. They said, "Don't go anywhere."

Commissioner Frank Gribbon came over and said, you know, he was dressed out in his uniform, in his turnout gear, and he said, "I'm going to get a crew, I'll be right back." Two firemen that were there said, you know, "We're not going to leave you," and they saw a stretcher over here, let's grab the stretcher. They put me on the stretcher, and said, you

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know, the best thing to do is probably go out through the loading dock into the building and out the back of the building where it's safe.

They said okay. So they wheeled me down to the loading dock, put me up on the loading dock into the building. Just as we are getting ready to get onto the elevator, we heard a high pitched whine and wind and heard thundering crashes. It turned out to be -- we thought -- we originally thought it was the building that we were in was coming down, but it turned out to be the other tower.

Q. That was the north tower?

A. Right.

At that point, the power went out in the building. They switched to their flashlights. After a couple of minutes, the emergency generators, I guess, kicked in or the emergency batteries. Some lights came back on, and they are, like, we need to get out of here, and I said, "Well, I can't walk." They said, "Well, we're not leaving you either," so they got on their radio and managed to get a couple of people that were upstairs. They came down the fire escape inside the stair building. I think it was Stairway F or G. The five of them carried myself and the hundred pound

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ambulance stretcher up four flights of stairs.

They had said, you know, "My name is Steve and my name is --" the other guy's name is Gary, and, you know, "We are going the help you." Listening to them talk on the radio, I was able to come to the conclusion that they were from Truck 6. They were saying Truck 6 to whoever, and they were, you know -- those people came down.

They then proceeded to get me up the stairs. After about ten, fifteen minutes they got me up to the top, and they wheeled me out. There was a battalion chief there. I couldn't see his name.

They took me out the side door of the American Express Building and wheeled me down to the marina. The same time, there was a police launch pulling up, so they wheeled me down to the marina the rest of the way and put me on the police launch.

At that point, I was still basically in shock and sort of like in a daze, and they then took me -- took a few other people. They said, "We are out of here." They backed away, and they went to Ellis Island. I had asked them if they could take me to Staten Island, but they said, "No, no, no, we can't do that."

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We got to Ellis Island. The New Jersey EMS was in the process of setting up their command post and their resources. They helped me. They carried the stretcher off of the boat onto the ground. They switched me on to a Jersey stretcher, put the other stretcher back in to go back and get more patients. At that point, I was triaged by the Jersey EMS, and they triaged me as a yellow and -- excuse me, as a red, because I was still having some difficulty breathing with all the stuff that I had inhaled.

They then put me into an ambulance and took me to Jersey City Medical Center. There they traumaed me and, you know, did the whole trauma workup, where I was then admitted, and so on and so forth.

Q. So they did the surgery in Jersey, right?

A. No, they did --

Q. Just stabilize you?

A. They stabilized me. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]



ROGER MOORE

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] "But we are going to have to admit you anyway for the legs, because you can't move. The x-rays don't show any broken bones, however, it looks like you've torn the muscle. We are going to have to get MRIs to do it."

They then wheeled me up onto another floor that they had just opened to -- for this disaster, and I was medicated the rest of the afternoon.

That night, PD showed up. New York City PD was going around taking names and information from all the patients that were there. At that point, I asked one of the officers if he could try and contact my wife, and they were, like, well, the phones are out, so he says, "Let me try something."

He switched on his radio and was able to hit the Staten Island dispatcher, and they sent the car to my address.

Q. That was very nice.

A. However, she -- when she -- my wife saw the incident, she was off that day. She went in to work to help in the ER. So that night she comes home at about

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11:30, not knowing where I am and knows that I always call and was quite concerned. She comes in, and neighbors come in behind her and tell her, well, you know, the police were here.

So at that point she finally got ahold of Division 5, and she found out where I was. My neighbors drove her and some other friends to the hospital at one o'clock in the morning, and then I saw my wife.

The next day, they treated me and ruled out the hip fracture that they thought I had, which I didn't. I said I really want to get to Staten Island because I want to be able to contact my wife. I couldn't call anybody because of the phones being restricted, because of the hospital, you know, policy. They only had two or one, so it was next to impossible for me to try and contact.

I had made it known, and the next thing I knew I was transferred that night, Wednesday night, around eleven o'clock. Jersey EMS took me to Staten Island Hospital, where I was admitted. At that point they took over my care, and my regular physician, Dr. Carl Andersen, along with orthopedics from Staten Island Associates, took over my case. They requested

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MRIs of both my legs, and they continued treating my eyes, and my breathing, and my arm and what not. Then I had the surgery on both legs. They told me that the MRIs showed that my left leg was completely detached, the muscles completely detached, along with the ligaments and the tendons, and retracted. The right leg had a partial tear in the muscle and tendons. The tendons were torn.

So they reattached everything. They put my left leg into a cast that I had to have on for six weeks. They -- the right leg with minimal work, they put a removable splint on.

After a couple of days in the hospital, they then moved me in the hospital to inpatient rehab where I spent the next two and a half weeks. Then from there I was released on October 12. I came home, and I am now going to outpatient rehab at Staten Island University Hospital.

MR. MURAD: There is nothing really I need to ask of you, so at this time, this will conclude the interview.

I'd like to thank you, Lieutenant Roger Moore.

The time now is 1425 hours, and this concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110273

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT FRANK PUMA

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 0730 hours. I am Murray Murad of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

EMT PUMA: EMT Frank Puma of Division 1 EMS.

MR. MURAD: The interview is being done at Battalion 8, the Kips Bay station, Station 13. This is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Can you please describe the events with respect to that day?

A. Just from the collapse?

Q. Yeah, from the time the call came in, from the beginning or whenever you were there, to the World Trade Center.

A. Before the first plane even hit, me and my partner -- our unit designation is 1 Adam, and our street corner is Fulton and Church, it's our 89. So we were about a block away, two blocks away on Barclay between Church and Broadway getting breakfast when we heard the first plane hit.

After we heard the first plane hit and felt the ground shake, I ran down to the corner of Church and Park Place, looked up and I saw the plane shooting out of the top of the towers. That's when I grabbed for my radio and yelled over the air, "1 Adam. A bomb just went off in the Trade Center."

Me and my partner proceeded to grab the ambulance, turn it around. I jumped in the passenger seat, and we drove right up to Vesey and Church. When we got there, all the people started running out to us, and we were bombarded with patients.

Through that whole time before the second plane hit, we were treating anywhere between 7 and 15 different patients. When the second plane hit, me and my partner were in the back of our ambulance. We felt all the debris come down, bouncing off of me, myself, my partner, shooting inside the back of our ambulance and rocking our ambulance back and forth. We shut the doors, jumped on top of all of our patients.

Once all that cleared up, once the

ambulance stopped rocking, my partner looks at me and says, "We've got to get out of here." He then proceeded to get into the driver's seat, and we started making our way to NYU Downtown Hospital, Beekman, to drop off our first set of patients when we got flagged down for another lady who got hit by the landing gear of the first plane.

We then proceeded to put her on a long board as best as we could, because we couldn't roll her because she had no back anymore. We put her on the long board and put her in the back of the ambulance, dropped off our first set of patients at Beekman Hospital.

Then after that we took about a minute to take some sterile water and clean off the back of the ambulance, all the blood and everything. From there we proceeded to go back into ground zero. We started our way back in, and we stopped again on Barclay and Church Street, where we helped another unit long board two more patients.

We then proceeded to go back to Vesey and Church where we originally were, but we were stopped by the PD. We noticed other ambulances

going into Battery Park City, so we followed them. That's where we had our triage center set up, one of our many triage centers that day.

We were placed at the back of the line. We left our ambulance running. We went up to the LSU truck to go get more supplies, because we diminished the first set of supplies. We started walking back up towards West Street between Liberty and Vesey when we heard them start screaming over the radio that the first tower, the south tower, was ready to fall.

We started running because we looked up and we saw the part of the tower coming down. Me and my partner started running, and I ran west down Vesey Street and almost jumped right into the Hudson River.

Once all the smoke and debris cleared up from the first tower collapse, I then got up to look around for anybody that I knew. I ran into a couple people that I work with: EMT Allen Cruz, who was working the LSU truck that day, EMT Joe Torres, EMT Mike D'Angelo and a couple other faces that I don't remember their names.

We then proceeded to go in to move all



the ambulances that were parked on Vesey and West Street and move them up further on North End Avenue. Then we heard them screaming over the air that the second tower was ready to fall.

I then proceeded to run back to my ambulance, started up the ignition and grabbed EMT Mike D'Angelo with me, and we started driving off. I made it as far as Chambers and West before the cloud of smoke caught up to me. When the cloud of smoke caught up to me, me and him were stuck, trapped inside of our ambulance for approximately it felt like about ten minutes. It could have been anywhere between five and ten minutes.

I shut the motor off. That way the motor wouldn't take in any of the fumes. We had all the doors shut and all the windows closed. We were stuck in the ambulance in pitch-black for about ten minutes with all the smoke finding its way in there.

Once that cleared up, we got out of the ambulance and walked back to Vesey and North End Avenue to see if there was anybody else that we knew around there. We ran into EMT Joe Torres

again and EMT Allen Cruz. Then after that we heard that we were starting to set our staging area up further near the Chelsea Piers.

We proceeded to run back to our ambulance, and we took off. We started making our way up north via West Street where we stopped off at North Moore and West Street where we ran into a lot of the other EMTs and paramedics who were operating at the scene. I finally ran into my partner, Orlando Martinez, after an hour and a half of being separated from him.

Then we heard them screaming over the air again that there was a gas leak, everyone keep pushing forward. We then proceeded to get back in our ambulance. My partner, Orlando Martinez, was driving the ambulance at that time. I jumped in the passenger seat. EMT Mike D'Angelo jumped on my lap, and about ten other EMTs and paramedics jumped in the back of our ambulance and just started screaming to drive.

We proceeded to go up to the Chelsea Piers, where they had our staging area set up there. Once we got up there, we just started looking for anybody who was from our station.

Then at that point we started running into more people from our station, EMT John Moritz, EMT Kevin McKeon. I don't remember all the names offhand. Then we just stayed there until we were relieved by CISD at approximately 8:30 at night.

Q. Were you operating on any type of radio frequency or how was the radio communications at the time?

A. That morning I believe that both Manhattan south and Manhattan central were operating on the Manhattan central frequency, and we were told to just stay on that one frequency throughout the whole operation, intermittently switching between Manhattan south and citywide.

Q. You did find your partner. Your partner was Orlando Martinez; right?

A. Yeah. Me and him were separated for approximately an hour and a half after the first tower collapsed, because he ran north and I ran west.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. Unless you want to know the details about the stuff that I saw.

Q. Well, if you would like to go into it, you can.

A. I remember when we pulled up first, because we were the first emergency unit on the scene there, I remember counting at least six bodies who jumped out from the 50th floor. I know one of the bystanders, one of the civilians, as he was running out of the towers ran up to us and told us, "You've got to help this guy." I turned to him and said "All right. What happened? Where is he?" He said, "He just jumped." I said, "From where?" He said, "I don't know. It looked like the 50th, 60th floor." I said, "Brother, I'm sorry to say he's dead. Just keep running."

I remember after the first tower collapsed hearing over the EMS frequency all the EMS members screaming, "Mayday, mayday. Somebody please help us. We don't want to die in here." I listened to that for about two, three minutes. You had to lower the volume because you couldn't stand listening to that anymore.

I remember the F-16s and the F-18s flying overhead before the first tower collapsed

that we all jumped on the floor because we didn't know what it was. We looked up and saw it was our guys, and we were like, okay, we can stand up now and take control of this.

I remember trying to run around trying to find like a respirator or something to put on our faces after the first tower came down, because we had no equipment with us. I remember losing all of my equipment down at the Trade Center before we left to drop off our first set of patients, because I had all my stuff on the outside.

I just remember the sheer look of terror that came over my partner's face, which really got me nervous. When I saw that, I knew I was in trouble.

I remember seeing some of the engine companies go in. I work downtown Manhattan, so I was friendly with a lot of the firefighters who were around there. I remember seeing a lot of them run in and not seeing them ever again.

I knew all the Port Authority cops who worked in the building, because, like I said, that was my street. That was my 89 was the Trade

Center. So we knew all the Port Authority cops in there by first names. We knew their first names, their shield numbers. When we walked in, they knew our shield numbers. We just like, "Hey, how you doing? How's your wife and your kids?" I remember reading about them in the newspaper that they still haven't found their bodies yet or seen that they were confirmed dead.

I remember my parents' voice when I was on the phone with them. Right before the first tower collapsed, I was on the phone with my mother, telling her that two planes hit the Trade Center, that I was all right and okay, that I was still standing near the buildings but I was all right. Then we got disconnected, and that's when the first tower came down.

I didn't get a chance to call my family until about two and a half hours after that. I remember the sounds of joy in my mother's voice when she heard me, that I was still alive.

Q. That was important, communications to the family.

All right. I'd like to thank you for this interview.

MR. MURAD: The time now is 740 hours,  
and this concludes the interview. Thank you  
very much.

EMT PUMA: Thank you.

File No. 9110274

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT CHARLES GSCHLECHT

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



## C. GSCHLECHT

MR. MURAD: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is 620 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with the following.

A. Charles Gschlecht, shield number 5445 of Battalion 8.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 8 located at Kip Bay station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Charles, can you please give us your perspective on what happened that day?

A. All right. Well, the day started out as usual, you know, sign for the equipment, putting it on the truck, logging on, and going on to our CSL. Traveling up First Avenue to 34 Street, when we got to about 34 Street and Park Avenue, I forget what unit it was, but they said something just hit the World Trade Center. A few minutes after that you hear other people saying the same thing.

Somebody said they thought it was a plane and that there was an explosion. So I asked my partner if

## C. GSCHELECHT

he wanted to take the job, because we weren't assigned a job and he said yes, okay. We asked for the assignment. The dispatcher gave it to us and we started responding down 34 Street to West Street heading south.

About when we got to Chambers Street, by the college, we saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center. I told my partner slow down and wait to see if the building was going to collapse right away, because you could see it swaying. After a couple of minutes of waiting, we didn't see it collapse, so we started heading in further.

When we got to Vesey and West Street, the Lieutenant told us to set up second staging at 3 World Financial Center. I guess they were getting all the walking wounded that were coming over the pedestrian bridge. There were busses lined up there. Then we were triaging people, minor burns I guess. Then started loading them up on city busses. I remember running out of equipment, so I had to go to the LSU van, which was on the corner.

I saw people jumping out of the World Trade Center. I saw a few people, I guess maybe three or four. After that I couldn't watch any more so I went

## C. GSCHELECHT

back, took the equipment and I guess by the time I got back, I don't remember how long it took for, you know, the building to collapse or whatever, but most of the people were already in the busses and they were already going up like I guess towards the -- what is that place on 23 Street, Chelsea Piers.

So then I heard -- I guess -- I'm not too sure. I know I heard a rumble and I figured it was the building coming down. I told my partner run and I started running and there was one person left there. I can't remember her name, but she was in the chair. She was strapped in the chair, so I ran back and I got her and just started running. Also the people started running up West Street. I guess they were overcome by like dust and debris and I started running up West towards the Hudson River. Then I started running north.

I got back on West Street around Murray and there was another Lieutenant there, I can't remember his name, but he said that it was all over, that we are going to go two blocks in. I told him, I said, listen, if the first building collapsed, you don't think the second building is going to collapse.

Then maybe about 10 minutes of deciding

## C. GSCHELECHT

whether or not he was going to go two blocks in, the other building collapsed, I guess 10, 20 minutes. I don't know. Then I just started running up South Street, I couldn't find my partner for about 3 and a half hours, because initially when I told him to run, he started running with me and then I turn around and he is gone. I had no idea where he was. Like I said 3 and a half hours later I found him. He told me, I think he was with the Captain and a Chief.

Q. Do you know the Captain's name or the Chief's name?

A. Yes, Captain Stone. He had to go to the hospital. He was injured. I don't know what part of the body was injured.

Q. And the Chief's name?

A. Hirth. Chief Hirth. I guess that's about it.

Q. At any time, were you asked to switch to any frequency on the response into the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, we were all on Citywide, but I had lost my radio when I was running. I left all my equipment in the truck. I saw the radio fall, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I just kept running.

## C. GSCHLECHT

Q. Anything else that you think you would like to add?

A. I guess that's about it.

MR. MURAD: Okay, time now is 0630. I would like to thank you, Charles, for this interview. This will conclude the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110275

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ALBERT SINGER

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

A. SINGER

MR. MURAD: Today is December 12, 2001. The time is 0600 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Albert Singer.

Q. Your rank and your command please?

A. Paramedic, Battalion 8, Manhattan.

Q. The interview is being conducted at Battalion 8, the Kip Bay station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Al, can you please give us your perspective on that day, on September 11?

A. Okay. Just prior to the collapse, my partner and I, Arty Gonzalez, and I were doing an RMA in the Long Island Railroad when the first plane hit. We were just completing the RMA and when the second plane hit, we knew that we had to respond.

So we finished the RMA, we went to our ambulance. We had on the computer screen on the ambulance, the job was already there to respond to the World Trade Center. We drove down the West Side Highway. When we arrived at the vicinity of the World Trade Center, we were staged on the street on the West Side Highway, approximately where the AMEX, number 3 World -- the AMEX building, 3 World Financial Center

A. SINGER

was.

We were initially on the street. We observed the building, presumably the first World Trade Center, on fire and people were jumping off the roofs. About 10 minutes later, we were told to set up a staging inside what I believe to be the American Express lobby. My partner and I, Arty Gonzalez, set up a staging area.

10 minutes later a co-worker of ours, Corey Romanowski from BHS, showed up. We asked him to remain with us since he was unassigned. About 10 minutes later, two EMTs came running into the building saying that the World Trade Center was collapsing, that we should run.

We proceeded out the American Express building and we proceeded to the building directly behind, which was 4 Financial Center, which is the Merrill Lynch building. We remained in that for about 5 minutes before we were told to evacuate because there was a chance that the gas lines had been ruptured and the building was in danger of exploding.

Following that, we went on to Vesey Street, where the commanding officer, whose name I don't recall, suggested we head towards the waterfront, which



A. SINGER

might have been the safest place. When we responded there, we remained there for about 5 minutes until we were redeployed up to one of the buildings on North End Avenue where staging had been set up. The MERV had been brought up.

We treated and triaged some patients in the lobby of that building for about 15, 20 minutes. When it was deemed unsafe to remain there, every patient that was in the lobby was evacuated, whether by MERV or by ambulance, up to 23 Street. We had the first patient that we transported, so from that point on we transported our patient to St. Vincent's Hospital.

Q. I just want to check with you. On that day what unit were you guys assigned to?

A. 7 Young, Tour 2.

Q. Were you operating on any radio frequency? Were you told to switch to any certain radio frequency and what was the radio transmissions like during that time?

A. We were switched over. We were told to switch over to Citywide, but we never had to utilize the radio since the job was already on the KDT.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to mention or --

## A. SINGER

A. I would like to mention that I think Corey Romanowski was a very heroic individual, he told us his experience outside the building. He had stepped outside for a few minutes and he came -- he told us later on that he was nearly killed by the collapsing rubble of the building and he had dived under a fire truck, which had the springs collapsed by the weight of it while he was underneath it and he said that there were a couple of EMTs that were running for cover for the same fire truck and he said that they didn't make it, so he considered himself very lucky. He didn't know which way to run because of the fire and smoke. Eventually he did get out. That was the most remarkable thing I heard of the whole experience.

MR. MURAD: Okay. Paramedic Albert Singer, I would like to thank you. The time is 0605 hours. This concludes the interview of the World Trade Center. Thank you very much.

File No. 911303

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT-D RALPH RAMOS

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

R. RAMOS

MS. BASTEDENBECK: December 12, 2001. The time now is 1556 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck of the New York City Fire Department. I'm at EMS Battalion 4 conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and your current unit.

A. My name is Ralph Ramos, EMT-D, assigned to 01 Charlie Tour 2, Battalion 4.

Q. MR. RAMOS, I would ask you if you can recount the events of September 11, 2001. Were you working that day?

A. Yes, I was working. I started at 0600 that morning. I was on my way back to my 89, which is on Duane and Church Street. We were returning back there from Battalion 4 and we were going up, I believe it's Pearl Street, and my partner Alex Loutsky and I, we witnessed the first plane hit the first tower. Saw it flying low and we thought, that plane's flying kind of low, and then it hit the building and we went over the radio and we told central that we had witnessed a plane hitting the building, and at first she didn't believe us, but then other units started saying they saw the same thing and then we proceeded straight over to the

R. RAMOS

Trade Center.

We went down West Street and parked at West and Liberty. There was -- Lieutenant D'Avila was there. There were several other units already on the scene and there was a wave of people running out of the building, running towards us. Stopped like about maybe 4 people, put them into our vehicle and I was treating them and in the process of doing that, the second plane hit right over top of us and all the debris started falling down on top of us.

So we got in our vehicle. At that time everybody left the vehicle and ran down West Street. Everybody started running in different directions. We got into our vehicle and we followed Lieutenant D'Avila around to the east side of the building, which was Church Street and Dey Street and we parked on that corner there. He parked in front of us.

On that side people were running out also, so we set up a triage and treatment in front of the hotel Millennium, which is right cross the street from them and we started treating patients as they were coming out. We stayed there for a while. Lieutenant D'Avila lost his voice, so he had asked me to stay next to him to sort of be his voice as far as giving the orders.

R. RAMOS

We were treating people and triaging and trying to send people out from that location. The vehicle, my vehicle, 219, stayed on the corner of Church and Dey, so see if they needed that for transport. It stayed there. In the process of treating and organizing the people getting out of there, all of a sudden we heard the rumble of the first tower, and it was just, you know, really just chaotic on the corner that we were at. We treated as many people as we could and got a lot of the people out of there via private ambulances and Fire Department ambulances that were on the scene.

When the first tower started coming down, I got separated from Lieutenant D'Avila and my partner Alex. I started running towards -- we were on the corner close to Dey Street and Fulton Street, so I started running towards Fulton Street to try to get out of harms way, but by that time it was too late, because the building had come down. The dust cloud covered me and I couldn't see and I couldn't breathe.

Q. Do you know where you were then?

A. At that moment, at first the panic, I got disoriented from the panic, but I have worked this area for about a year and my unit has always been in that

R. RAMOS

area. I sort of closed my eyes and then made a map in my head of what I last saw and then using that as a guide in my head and feeling with my hands, I was able to find the building and just like patted alongside of the building until I got down Fulton Street.

I made it as far as Broadway and I went into the bank that's on the corner, the left hand side of Fulton and Broadway. I think it's a Chase bank. I made it into the lobby of that building. Helped some people who were in there who had stuff in their eyes and stuff like that. Pouring water on it, get the dirt out of their eyes, like that. Tried to calm some people down. People who were in that building were trying to leave that building. You couldn't see outside.

So I was trying to keep them -- blocking the doors, trying to keep them inside. It was me and another fireman, it was just us two that made it into that building. We kept everybody inside, then I ran into one of the EMS doctors, Fire Department doctors. I forgot his name. We ran into him and he said you know, just try to take care of as many people as you can in here, just flushing their eyes and stuff like that.

R. RAMOS

Did that and then it cleared up enough outside, I realized that I left -- my partner was missing and Lieutenant D'Avila was missing. I was getting ready to head out and I ran into Lieutenant D'Avila. He had made it to the bank as well. We went back down Fulton Street back to the front of the building to look for my partner.

So Lieutenant Melarango, who was there also, and Amy, Lieutenant Monroe. We went down to try to find them and see how many people we could help. We went back down and it was like a ghost town down there. We didn't see anybody, people laying around and stuff, but as far as walking around, there really wasn't anybody.

My vehicle exploded. I was heading over to my vehicle to get -- to use the radio, because I had lost my HIP radio. I went inside my vehicle to get on my vehicle radio, but by the time I went over there, the vehicle exploded. Then we just continued to look around see, you know, how many people we could find. It is a little bit of a blur. I don't recall how many people we might have run into.

At that time, then, in the process of doing that, we heard another loud rumble and it was the



R. RAMOS

second tower coming down. We both started -- you know, we hugged, locked arms. Both started running, but we didn't make it too far. Again, we got covered with the cloud and everything got black again. We couldn't breathe and we were panicking. Again, I closed my eyes and mapped my way out of there and made it to a Subway sandwich shop that's on Fulton Street and banged on the glass. They didn't want to let us in. We saw people in the back. I was waiting for someone to open the door, we were banging on the glass. We couldn't breathe any more. Everything was fading fast. Finally one of the people came and opened the door and we went in.

There was only about 12 people in the store. They were all panicking and stuff like that. When they saw us, they kind of calmed down. We wet towels and wrapped them around their heads and we got them out of the store down Fulton Street towards New York downtown hospital to get them out of there.

Then after that, I ran into a couple of Beekman, the New York downtown medics. Two Beekman medics. I can't recall. I can't recall. I stuck with Lieutenant D'Avila.

We got supplies and took it over to 49 Fulton

R. RAMOS

Street, where they had set up a little triage area also. We took supplies from the hospital and brought them over there. From there we went to West and Chambers to the high school. They had set up --

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. Yes. We went over there. Ran into a lot of my friends. (inaudible), who was from this Battalion, but transferred out. I think I saw Thomas Monahan, Tommy Monahan, who was from this Battalion. I saw -- I don't know his first name. I know his last name is Hayden and his Father is a Chief of the fire suppression side. I saw him. I saw Allan Cruz from this Battalion. He does the LSU from this Battalion.

Q. Did you ever reunite with your partner?

A. No, actually. We had gotten separated, so the whole time he was thinking I was dead and I was thinking he was dead. Looking for him though, (inaudible), and the mass of all the people who were there, and all those people who responded. All those who were told to stay in the high school until they needed them. Looking through faces, trying to see him and I didn't see him for a long time. It wasn't until the next day that I saw him.

Q. Did you ever get word that day that he was

R. RAMOS

okay?

A. No, not that day.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. I looked through the whole entire high school to see if he made it or not. I stayed over there at the high school for a while, until, I think about 9 o'clock at night and then I couldn't go any more, because it was just too overwhelming for me and I passed out and I woke up in New York downtown hospital. Got treated for exhaustion and smoke inhalation and stuff.

Q. Do you know how you got there?

A. I remember telling Lieutenant D'Avila that I wasn't feeling right and then they started walking me over towards the MERV and I just sort of woke up in the emergency room.

Q. Beekman?

A. Beekman, yes. They treated me there and then they released me. I went home, I walked back to the Battalion first to take my stuff and leave it in the locker, my uniform, and put my street clothes back on. I walked from New York downtown back here to the Battalion.

Then I saw my friend, (inaudible), was here.

R. RAMOS

I saw Orlando Martinez, Frank Puma. Who else? I think I saw Rick Abono, Rick Abono was here also, I believe.

Q. Are these people that work at your Battalion?

A. Yes.

Q. They were all working that day?

A. Yes. They were all people from this Battalion. Some of them responded in from home. They came in. I saw Gregory Zeek, who came in. He was on AL. He had like -- was on vacation. He came back in. He was here. He was my third partner from my unit. It was me, Al Loutsky and Gregory Zeek, all on one Charlie and Zeek was on vacation. Me and Al were working together that day.

I saw Zeek, who was off. He was here. I really can't recall, you know. They were glad to see me and I was glad to see them. But as far as specific faces and names, I really, I guess I'm trying to push it back into my head so much, instead, it's starting to become very vague for me.

I left work and I went home. From there went home. I came back to work the next day at 11 in the morning.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to the day, anything that strikes you or --

R. RAMOS

A. No. Just the terror of -- from almost having died twice. It was like, you know, I was never one to be afraid of dying and then it happened, almost happened once and I made it out of there and I was like glad I made it out. It was enough to put an impression on me and then to go through it again so quickly afterwards. So like the first time it put an impression on me and the second time is seared it into my head, you know.

So that is about it that I can think of. I'm glad that I'm here, that I was able to make it out.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes my interview with EMT Ramos. The time now is 1610 hours. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110304

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT NICOLE FERRELL

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

N. FERRELL

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The date is December 13th, 2001. The time is 0720 hours. My name is Tom McCourt, New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview at Battalion 45, EMS Command, in regards to the World Trade Center attack. Being interviewed is --

EMT FERRELL: Nicole Ferrell.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: -- EMT Nicole Ferrell.

Q. Could you please give me the details of your experiences on September 11th, 2001, at the World Trade Center?

A. When the first plane had hit, we were still parked in our area and I was sitting on Queens Boulevard and Greenpoint.

Q. What unit were you assigned to?

A. 49 Boy.

Q. 49 Boy. Okay.

A. When we heard that the plane went into the first building, we went and drove closer to the water, which was near the 108th Precinct on 50th Avenue and 5th Street, to get a better look. So we drove down and we saw that it was a fire and we heard units being dispatched to it, which we were not assigned at the time.

N. FERRELL

Q. Who were you working with?

A. Jeff Warner. We ended up going to another job instead and made that a 98. Then after we left that job, we went back to our unit to watch what was going on. We saw that it was still burning and we just waited to see if we were going get assigned to it. After a while my partner picked up the radio and kind of got us assigned to the job by asking the dispatcher did he need more people over there and they sent us.

On our way there, the first tower, which was the south tower, was the one that collapsed while we were en route. Then, when we got to -- what I believe is we drove down Broadway and we made a left. When I got to Liberty, right over here, is when the next tower collapsed, right after. After that we ran with all the people and we took the ambulance and we drove across Liberty again, went up I believe it was Church.

Q. When you got down there originally on Liberty, did you see anybody? The building hadn't collapsed at that point, right?

A. When I just pulled up to Liberty, we had just pulled up, just got out, and there was still debris flying around and no sooner than we got out is when the other tower came down.



N. FERRELL

Q. Okay.

A. No sooner. So we were out of there because we had parked over here. So then we came down Liberty and we went up, I believe, Church and went to this side instead, which was, I think, Vesey and Church, and we were standing in front of building 5, across from the post office. Then, from there I told him let's go up West Street. So we went up to West and I believe Murray and left the ambulance and walked back down over here. After a while, just things started happening because we couldn't find anybody.

Q. You didn't come in contact with anybody, any supervisors or anybody from your command or anybody?

A. No. Not at all. Because by the time we got over here, everybody was like running in every direction. You couldn't barely see at all. It was like snow, the stuff was so heavy, and people were just running and screaming and stuff like that. Some cars were on fire and I remember some people were choking and stuff and running towards there but they didn't want to be treated and they kept going.

Q. Did you treat any patients at all?

A. Actually, we attempted to treat a firefighter and he didn't want to be treated. But what we did was

N. FERRELL

he said he wanted to be driven back to another area where I guess they were doing like staging or something like that. So I told him that we would drive him around to where the MERV is and maybe he can reconnect with some of the other Fire Department resources that were over here somewhere.

Q. So you moved from Church and Vesey?

A. Yes. We moved from Church and Vesey and we went up to -- let's see. If I'm not mistaken, I was going up West Street, because we actually just went, you know, we did an actual triangle just about and went up West Street and then cut across to meet everybody else somewhere over here, I believe. I think it was on West Street, that's where everybody was, and I was at the first MERV right over there.

Q. So it was West and Murray?

A. Yes. That's where we were.

Prior to us going to West and Murray with the fireman, we were right over -- I believe it was either 5 or 7. See, my memory is a little bad because I don't know. I'm having a little hard time with this. But we went (inaudible) -- no. You know what? It was 7. Now I remember. It was 7 because we went over here to West Street, like I said, and I stopped here at Barclay and

N. FERRELL

I saw the firefighter. There were people screaming out of one of these two buildings over here saying they couldn't get out, and my partner took one straggler fireman, the one that we had with us, and was trying to break the door because the door obviously had shifted or something. They couldn't get the door open.

Q. That was 7 World Trade Center?

A. I believe it was 7. Maybe it was 5. It was at the back end of it because I do remember the telephone company. So I think it was the back end of 7, I think right over here at that point, and they couldn't get out. Then I had ran down the block and I flagged a ladder company and they brought the ladder, which they had like a vestibule that you couldn't like really reach the people because the ladder wouldn't reach. So they went and got other resources, they went inside the building, and I told my partner that it wasn't safe and that we need to go because everything around us was like falling apart. So we got back in the ambulance. Like I said, I had the firefighter with me who was still injured at the time.

Q. Do you know who that was? Do you remember?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Do you remember any company or was he --

N. FERRELL

A. No. My partner probably would remember more than I could because everything was a mess. People were grabbing other people's coats and helmets. So I honestly don't know where he was from. All I know is that he was having a problem with his eyes and stuff like that, like us. He was complaining he couldn't see and stuff like that. But he couldn't find the rest of his company.

So that was it. Then we went to over here to the MERV, in that area over there, and we had our bus parked near the school. Yes, right over here. We parked the bus down here and we walked to where everybody else was.

Q. That was on Murray and West?

A. Yes, I believe it was Murray and West. Wherever the college is? We were across the street from there and the pedestrian walkway was in front of us. I remember looking directly at it. I had went into an area where they had a whole bunch of EMTs and paramedics that were supposed to be congregating inside the auditorium in which they piled us all in. They closed one door and left the other one open. It was conducted by Lieutenant Kathy Fuchs. She told us all to gather all our equipment, gather together and we're

N. FERRELL

going to go out in groups of four or five, which would be like two paramedics and two EMTs or whatever.

About a few minutes after that, we all piled in there and stuff, the lights went out, we lost power. She closed the door and locked us all in there and she ran. So we started trampling each other. So everybody started running all over each other. People were getting hurt and stuff. Finally a police officer came and opened the door for us because he heard us all screaming in there for about 15 minutes. We were in complete darkness.

We came out and she told us to sit along -- let's see. I believe it's like a water area over here. It's like River Terrace. She told us to move down, I believe, over here and pile over here instead. When I saw that her plan wasn't working, I abandoned ship and I went to go stay with my Captain and Chief Nigro across from the MERV. I was there for a good part of the evening, but I was -- let's see. The walkway came down. 1 and 2 had already fell. I believe it was either 7 -- but 7 was empty at the time, when it came down, that I remember. We had just missed the collapse of 7 because me and my partner moved away. Then we were in the MERV, and after the MERV, we

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stayed there for a few hours or so and we rode around with a Cushman vehicle and we rode around the area where the site was, they let us ride around, all through here, all around here, where all the collapses were, and that's basically it.

Then we went and made a makeshift hospital at an apartment building which was -- this part is going to be difficult because I'm not really sure exactly where this building was.

Q. Okay. That's all right.

A. But there was an apartment building. It looked like a hotel but it wasn't a hotel and they made it -- maybe it was the Millenium. It could have been the Millenium. I'm not really sure because there was just too much going on. But they made a makeshift hospital over there. They made us all set out like IVs and stuff like that and water and stuff, and we all stayed there for a good part of the night freezing to death and we started getting sick. So Lieutenant Hadala told us that we were all going to move from that location because it was freezing and it was dirty and we were filthy and we all were starting to get sick and we couldn't breathe.

So we jumped into the MERV and moved closer

N. FERRELL

up to Vesey Street, and I came back to look for my ambulance, which was supposed to be parked over here at West and somewhere, Murray or something, and they took my ambulance away. They took all my equipment away, they took all my personal stuff away, and my stuff was stolen. So I went to go with the gang to ask one of the supervisors where all my stuff was, and they said that they took our ambulance away because they thought that we had passed away. So they took our truck to Bureau of Training, and we stayed here for the rest of the night stranded until we found somebody to take us back. We were there for a total of, I believe, 28 hours, 30 hours, and we came back to the station.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't see any EMTs or paramedics or anything prior to them passing that were listed or (inaudible). As far as firefighters, I have no idea. I don't know who I saw or what. It was total chaos. So that was it.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: Okay. The time now is 7:30. That concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110305

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PATRICK RICHIUSA

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis



P. RICHIUSA

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The date is December 13, 2001. The time is 0742 hours. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. We are currently at EMS Command, Battalion 45. I'm currently interviewing --

EMT RICHIUSA: Patrick Richiusa.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: -- that's EMT Patrick Richiusa from Battalion 45.

Q. EMT Richiusa, can you please tell me the events that transpired on September 11th, 2001, from your perspective, please?

A. Okay. We left the station to go to our 89, and about 8:45 in the morning we noticed smoke coming from one of the towers, my partner and I, Laura Siebuhr. So we moved our position to a better location to see if maybe it was just a smokestack of a building in front that was just from the angle. It turns out that it was the tower that was on fire. So I asked the dispatcher over the air and --

Q. Where were you sitting at this point?

A. Metropolitan and Forest Avenue. We moved to a better position and from there you could see the actual tower was on fire. So I asked the dispatcher over the air, and there was silence for about a minute,

P. RICHIUSA

and then the tones went off and they said a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. So they started sending units from all over the place and I was assigned. I went over the 59th Street bridge. I forget exactly what route I took. I picked up two priests on the way once I had crossed the bridge into Manhattan because they asked if we were going and I figured they were going to be needed if a plane crashed into the Trade Center.

So I came across Vesey to West. That's where staging was. I arrived there. I let the two priests out. I never saw them again. I found the first Lieutenant from EMS that I saw and he told me to go over to triage, which was right by 3 Financial.

Q. Do you remember what Lieutenant that was? Do you have any idea?

A. I have no idea. There was a group. It was a couple Lieutenants and I believe one Captain. I don't recall any one of their faces.

Q. Okay.

A. From there I went over to triage. There was about 15 people all laying around on the floor there, nurses, doctors, private ambulances, Fire Department ambulances, volunteer ambulances from Hatzolah. I

P. RICHIUSA

believe Forest Hills was also there.

Q. What was the status of the towers then?

A. They were still standing. This was about five minutes before the second plane hit and nobody had known it was a terrorist attack. So it was just -- we positioned the furthest point from Trade Center 2, which was the one first to get hit. So we went over and then the private ambulances started to try to take patients away, but I had no names and nothing else. So I went over to a Lieutenant and a Captain and I asked them and he put me in charge. So I went back and -- he told me nobody leaves until you say so, and I said okay, until you get names and all the other information.

So I went back, stopped the ambulances. There was a city bus. Everybody was walking wounded. So I figured we could just take all 15 people in one shot in the city bus, and I was going back to ask the Lieutenant when the second plane hit. It was a loud thunder noise and you looked up and all the buildings on the opposite side of the tower's windows were shaking. So somebody started yelling run, so my partner and I both ran with all the people. The patients all got up and ran. We all ran towards the

P. RICHIUSA

Hudson, down West towards -- I mean Vesey. Sorry. I got that all backwards. Towards Vesey, towards the Hudson. When we arrived at, I guess, North End Avenue, that's when all that debris fell and it all -- basically, there was nowhere else to run, so you got enveloped by the cloud of smoke and debris. After that settled, there was a little chaos. Nobody was quite sure what happened.

Q. That was the debris from the --

A. The plane actually crashing.

Q. The plane?

A. Yes. This was the actual when it blew out the 80 something floors.

Q. Okay.

A. That was the plane, the umbrella, you know, it looked like to me.

Q. So the debris went that far, up to the river?

A. It covered right up to the Hudson. I actually considered swimming the Hudson River because there was nowhere else left to run.

Then the debris settled and there was a little chaos and nobody was really quite sure what happened because all the vehicles were parked down the block and a lot of equipment was down the block. Some

P. RICHIUSA

of the vehicles had been positioned on North End, I guess, from other areas, or maybe they were told afterwards, after the second plane hit, where to go. There was a large crowd of people. I don't know where they all came from. I guess it was just from all over that general area. People were sharing cell phones to see if they could call. There were no signals, nothing else like that. Afterwards I saw Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Gombo.

Oh, prior to that I saw Bobby Abril, Carlos Lillo's partner, and my partner was a little nervous of the situation, she's new on the job, and I asked Bobby to stay with my partner, and he said, well, Carlos is down the block. I said, all right, I'll go get Carlos, you stay here, and I told Chief Kowalczyk and Chief Gombo that I was going to go down there and get Carlos and bring everybody else back up. He said, all right, tell them to bring all the equipment with them.

So on the way down the block, by 3 Financial, there was still some guys standing there. So I told them bring all the equipment back up the block because we're going to put staging up there now at -- I don't even know what building that was there.

Q. At Vesey and North End?

P. RICHIUSA

A. At Vesey and North End, yes. I think that was a hotel or something, in the lobby of there. So you had people coming up the block as I was going down the block, firemen, but you couldn't really recognize anybody because everybody was covered with the white powder, you know, you couldn't really see faces or anything else like that. There was nothing distinguishable about anybody. That's when I basically made the turn around West and I was coming across and it was by the pedestrian bridge when -- actually, no. The first tower fell and the second tower fell and we had no idea that the second tower fell. We were over here for a little while, then everybody got a little bit of their bearings back.

Q. So that debris was actually from the tower falling?

A. No, no. The first one was the plane crashing. My time frames are all messed up because things went and there was no time perception. I didn't realize how long I was there until I looked at my watch when it was time to go home. So I'm not sure exactly when 2 Trade Center fell because basically we were protected by the corner, the edge, because we were up over on North End and Vesey. So we wouldn't even have

P. RICHIUSA

known the second Trade Center had fallen because the debris would have been blocked by Trade Center 1 and 6 Trade Center. So I never even knew the Trade Center had fallen.

When I came around the block, and this was -- I don't remember what time it was. It was just minutes before 1 World Trade Center fell. I made the turn and two guys were walking towards me and I looked up and that's when I saw 1 Trade Center coming down. There was no way to outrun World Trade Center 1 from falling. So me and the two guys laid on the ground. I laid on top of them.

Q. Who were they?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Were they civilians?

A. Yes, civilians. One guy was a black guy in kind of a jump suit and one guy was a business guy dressed in something else. We got buried under all the debris from 1 World Trade Center and what was left of 6 Trade Center when they both came down because they toppled into each other. I don't know how long we were under there. Everything went black and I felt stuff hitting me all over the place and they were screaming, I was screaming, everybody was yelling. Basically, it

P. RICHIUSA

was so loud that you couldn't hear anything else except what was right in front of your face, and everything went so black that it went from as if you shut all the lights off and closed your eyes, it was that dark. It was hard to breathe. That stuff, all that powder was getting in our faces, your eyes burning and everything else.

I would say maybe a half an hour we were under that rubble before we dug ourselves out, before we thought it was okay. But when we opened our eyes, I thought, jeez, now we're in a cave. How the hell am I going to get out of here? But it was mostly debris and the powder. When we stood up after digging for about a half an hour, we basically just popped out of the powder, and five feet from where we were, an R&P, a cop car, was destroyed by an I-beam. So we got lucky with that.

I walked them -- we still couldn't really see. I had a flashlight and we just started walking to the side, and we walked into 3 Financial building and we traced that to the corner by touch because you still couldn't see anything, made the turn onto Vesey, and then all the way in the distance you could see a dim, blinking red light. I asked them if they could see the



P. RICHIUSA

dim, blinking red light, and they said yes. So I said head that way because from behind us I heard a whole bunch of people screaming.

So I went back and I met one lone fireman. I have no idea what his name was. I don't even know -- I couldn't even tell you what he looked like. But he came over to me, he gave me a Scott pack and a turnout coat to wear right then and there because we didn't know what else was going on, what else was going to hit. So I think that was out of -- I don't even know what truck that was. But I wound up giving that back later to one of the Battalion Chiefs.

Then we went and started looking, and he was looking for some guy, I think his name was Paul or Frank he said help me find. So we started looking and the ground was caved in right by 6 World Trade Center and in the distance you could see ladder trucks turned into the building and it was -- then it was dead silent. There was no noise after 1 Trade Center fell. It was like something out of a movie. It was really loud and then it was -- maybe it was just my hearing from the blast. I wasn't hearing the minor things. In the parking lot across the street, cars were exploding.

P. RICHIUSA

Then me and him went and looked and there were holes and stuff, and I said, well, where was he last? He goes I'm not exactly sure. There was nothing to landmark with at all at this point. So we just started looking through the rubble. We formed kind of like a Y or a V type of formation, always staying within visual of each other, to make sure neither one of us disappeared. I found a fireman -- I don't know. It was by a car, one of the Suburbans. I asked him are you okay? He said yeah, I'm fine, just like that. So he goes but two of my guys were on the other side of the truck. So I said okay. So I went around the other side of the truck and the other side of the truck was smashed by I-beams, and I looked under with a flashlight and I couldn't see anything.

Then one guy we heard from all the way up. I figure it was in, I would say, what is that, the Customs Building? 6 Trade Center. All right. We heard somebody yelling. So me and the other guy, I was up first because then I called him over because I didn't know how many people were up there and I was going into a building. So he came up behind me and we found one fireman up there, and I said are you okay? He said my back. I said, listen, you're a big guy. Me

P. RICHIUSA

and him aren't going to be able to carry you out of this, and he says, no, no, I can walk, I can walk.

So we started walking out of what I thought at that time was the third floor of 6 Financial. It turns out six floors were standing of it because of the way debris angled up. So he was holding on to us. As we were coming down, we fell, I don't know, 10 to 15 feet, and that's when I hurt my knee. I didn't really notice it then because it was just all utter chaos. There was like no time. I hadn't noticed that I had cut my arm and back either.

Then we carried him down -- well, we climbed out and then we all went down and that's when other firemen started coming. So I said all right. So now everything else is here. So I started heading back up the block. I saw a couple guys with EMS over by 3 Financial still. I said, listen, there's nothing over there for you guys. I said start heading back the other way and get all the equipment. I didn't know that everybody had left already.

So I went into a building that was on Vesey between North End and West, and my portable wasn't working. I had asked -- I said I'm also going to need, you know, I need to know where everybody is, and they

P. RICHIUSA

were like, well, where are you? I said I don't really know because I couldn't landmark anything. I shut the portable off because I wanted to reserve the battery because I didn't know how long this was going to be, and there was people screaming and yelling all over the radio from where they were and nobody knew where anything was. So it was kind of chaotic.

So I went into a store. I tried dialing zero on the phone. The operator, there was no answer. I guess the phone lines were down. I tried dialing 911. There was no answer on that either. So then I just started walking up North End and a Hatzolah ambulance I saw. I waved at them. They just waved at me and drove away. I don't know how far I walked. It was all the way up towards Stuyvesant, right in front of Stuyvesant High School. I don't know how far up that is.

That's when my partner was in a Cabrini ambulance with a bunch of other guys in plainclothes and they found me and they brought me over to Chelsea Piers. I still hadn't noticed -- because that's where staging had been brought to. Everything was pretty chaotic there, also, still at that point, doctors that were setting up forward triages and treatment areas and there was people everywhere, people that weren't even

P. RICHIUSA

involved in the Trade Centers that were just from Manhattan that were evacuated to that area. I ran into a couple of guys from my stations. I ran back into Bobby Abril and he asked me, did you see Carlos? So I said no, I never even got a chance to get that far.

From there we just hung out with each other. The union was there. They were doing -- the news was there. Everybody was asking is everybody okay and this, that and the other thing, is there anybody that they know of missing? That's when my partner noticed -- we went to go get something to drink because I had all that powder in my mouth and my eyes and everything else. I wanted to get washed off.

So she said, you know, your shirt's ripped and your pants are ripped. I said yeah, it's probably just nothing. So she goes let me see, and we pulled off my shirt and that's when I saw the laceration on the arm and the laceration on the back, which was, I don't know, six inches. She goes, oh, you're going to need that sewn up. I said, listen, I don't even notice that's there, so that's the least of my worries. She looked at my leg and it was just a minor abrasion to my leg. There was nothing really yet there.

So from there we went to get something to

P. RICHIUSA

drink, came back, and that's when -- I don't know. Time was pretty -- like I said, I don't even know what time that was. That could have been 2:00, 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. So then I went to -- who was it? I think it was Captain Sickles sent me to triage, and that's when I got sewn up on my arm. Then I went to the hospital that night and I left at 5:30, which I was pretty exhausted. I had an accident on the way home, too, with the ambulance.

Q. Really?

A. Yes. Somebody turned into me. Actually, the actor, Bill Nun, changed the tire for me. He was a nice guy. He came over there and said, oh, you guys had a hard enough day. We asked if they needed us back just before that and they said no, and that's when 7 Trade Center fell. But by that time they said you guys are done because we were there for nine hours, ten hours at that point. We were pretty exhausted.

Then we went to Parkway Hospital and they made the phone calls to confirm that we were alive besides that, and that was pretty much my day that day. Then I was out for the two days because I couldn't work with the open wounds, with the stitches, and then I went into my vacation, which was two days

P. RICHIUSA

before my month's vacation. So I spent my whole vacation -- and that night, the next night, after I went to BHS, my knee swelled up.

So I went back to the doctor and he said, well, you probably just sprained it really good. The pain didn't go away for like a week or two. So I went to get an MRI and that's when they found the tears in the medial and lateral meniscus. So my vacation was spent hobbling around.

Q. Anything else you left out or you can think of now that you want to add?

A. No, nothing that I can remember.

Q. Okay.

A. It's all pretty much a blank, that day.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The time is 8:00 o'clock. That concludes this interview. Thank you.

EMT RICHIUSA: Thank you.

File No. 9110306

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DAVID CIRA

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis



D. CIRA

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: The date is December 13th, 2001. The time is 9:15. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. We are currently at Battalion 45, EMS Command. I'm currently interviewing --

EMT CIRA: EMT David Cira, Division 4.

Q. EMT Cira, could you please tell me the events that took place on September 11th, 2001, from your perspective, please.

A. Shortly after the first plane was announced over the EMS frequency to have hit the first tower, my partner and I went 98 from an assignment out of Booth Memorial Hospital at Main Street and Booth Memorial Avenue.

Q. Who was your partner?

A. Felipe Torre. We were working 50 Adam, Tour 2, Vehicle 466. We were 98 for about three or four minutes when the assignment was sent over to our MDT. We hit the 63, acknowledged the assignment and headed into Manhattan. I entered Manhattan via the Brooklyn Bridge and we made -- where is the Brooklyn Bridge?

Q. It's got to be over this side.

A. We came down -- this has got to be it. I believe we came down John Street, made a right turn

## D. CIRA

onto Broadway, took that up several blocks, where we ended up on the corner of -- where we ended up on Vesey and Broadway, made a left turn onto Vesey Street, and we were stopped on the corner of Church and Vesey at a Citibank. We were flagged down by a woman who had a couple of patients, one of whom was complaining of chest pain, and various other injuries and whatnot that had been patients from the Trade Center itself that had gotten outside of the triage sector apparently. We were there with a North Shore University Hospital truck that was no special designation. They were a transport truck that decided to come out on their own. I believe one of the crew members was paramedic Adam Schriebman. We all began to triage the patients in the area.

We decided that we were going to move these individuals across the street to the north side of Fulton and Church, which it's showing here as a cemetery, but I remember it to be a Citibank, and we started to triage the patients when the building -- we looked outside, there was a rush of people coming down the block, and someone informed us that the tower was coming down. All we could basically do was take cover. I lost my partner at that point in time because of the rustle and I was trying to shield myself from

## D. CIRA

the debris. I lost my partner for somewhere in the line of -- I would assume it to be around 13, 14 minutes. We all had apparently walked up northbound on Church Street. Like I said, it took about 15 minutes when I finally met up with a Brooklyn bus.

Q. What was the scene like after the collapse?

A. Right after?

Q. Describe that a little bit.

A. It felt like a snowstorm at 3:00 o'clock in the morning. It was absolute, total silence.

Everybody and everything was covered. We had stumbled upon Captain Janice Olszewski, who was in a pile of -- it appeared to be just a pile of debris. At that point in time -- actually, let me step back a bit. I'm actually leaving something out.

When I had walked up north a bit, I'd met up with a Brooklyn bus, I believe either 39 Adam or 39 Charlie. I'm not sure. They took me back -- after the debris started to settle a bit, they took me back further south to meet up with my bus again and my partner, which was at the intersection of, I guess, Fulton and Church, which is where we found Captain Olszewski. At that time we had about seven patients at the back door of the ambulance that started to gather.

## D. CIRA

Most of them were police officers. We had Captain Olszewski there. We advised her to get into the ambulance. She said she was feeling okay and she was with another ambulance crew. We had seven people by the truck and we just, you know, green tag patients and we wanted to get them out of there.

So we took them out of the borough and we took them to Booth Memorial Hospital. We took them back there. Our reasons for going there were we had to go out of the borough because they were green tag patients. Brooklyn wasn't a feasible option because of all the traffic coming in and out. So the next best thing, we traveled northbound on -- I couldn't tell you the avenue. We found our way to the 59th Street bridge, which I took to the LIE, and I was -- I bypassed Elmhurst and I bypassed St. John's only because of the reason -- I bypassed Elmhurst because it is a major trauma center and a partial burn unit. I figured that, if any major patients were going to start spilling into Queens, leave that open, and then we went to Booth. It was right off the LIE, it was open, they were ready for us. I notified them on my own cell phone.

Then we were seen there at the ER briefly

## D. CIRA

just to make sure we were okay. We were both covered in dust. Our truck was a disaster. But to be honest with you, I don't remember much more than that about that morning. If you have any other specifics, I'm sure you could --

Q. Do you remember seeing anybody else other than the Captain or anybody?

A. I saw various EMS workers that I recognized just by uniform. Somewhere along the line I remember seeing Lieutenant Hadala, but I couldn't tell you what street corner I saw him on. He was with Paramedic Chevalo Wilson-DeBriano. But I don't remember where I saw them and, honestly, the time frame I really couldn't tell you because it was just, once those buildings came down, it was just --

Q. You weren't there for the second building, were you?

A. We were pulling away as that was going on. We were being advised by -- we were driving up through the crowd. We were trying to get through a crowd with a bus full of patients.

Q. Right.

A. We were being advised that the second tower was coming down, and we did, actually, if I'm not

D. CIRA

mistaken, we did see the debris cloud from the second building. But were we inside the cloud? No. We were cleared by then.

Q. So you never made it over to the command post or anything on the west side?

A. Never made it near the command post. We were assigned to go to West and Vesey. That was our original assignment location. We never made it there. We were flagged down, thank God. Like I said, we were flagged down on like Fulton and Church, somewhere along the Fulton and Church vicinity because we were on a corner and it was a Citibank. I definitely remember it being a Citibank because that's my bank and I just happen to remember that's where we were at.

Like I said, I took those patients to Queens and we were seen and we were sent back to the battalion and were released -- what is that? LOA, when they release you -- it was before the end of my tour, but they said that's okay, you can go home. Captain Scott Holliday was at the battalion and he released us for the remainder of the tour.

Q. All right. Anything else you can think of or anything?

A. I'm sure every time I sit down and tell the

D. CIRA

story, I could probably think of something to add into it, but those are the basics of it.

LIEUTENANT McCOURT: Okay. The time is 0923. That concludes this interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110331

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DIANE DeMARCO

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MR. MURAD: Today is December 14th, 2001. The time is. The time is 0800 hours. My name is Murray Murad from the Fire Department of the City of New York, and I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

State your name.

EMT DeMARCO: My name is Diane DeMarco. I'm an EMT for the Fire Department.

MR. MURAD: This interview is being conducted at Battalion 15, located at 4109 White Plains Road. This is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Diane, can you tell us what happened on that day?

A. I was assigned to unit 15 Boy, tour 2 that morning. I had responded up to the final outpost to pick up a partner. When I had arrived at the outpost, there was a call given of I think it's a 1040, plane into building. Shortly after that I was assigned to the job.

I responded down the West Side Highway, and as I was traveling down the West Side Highway the second plane had hit the other tower. At

that point I was traveling to my destination, which at the time was Vesey and West for a staging, I believe it was.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I was working with another EMT, Thomas Lopez.

We had gotten to the location of Vesey and West. There was really no one in charge down there. We were basically in charge of ourselves, which worked out pretty well. We were getting out of the vehicle. A supervisor had been passing us by. I don't know who he is, where he was from, but he had directed us to go into the building, the second floor of the building, with our equipment.

I don't know what happened. A couple of minutes after that, I saw my partner get his bags and start heading towards the building. I told him -- I had turned around myself. I had started to go get my tech bag, and I realized that is not a good idea. So I called Tommy back.

He came back to the vehicle. And just as he came back to the vehicle with me, a couple other units had come down and said, "Let's turn

the vehicles around," because we were facing into the location. So myself and a medic unit -- I don't know how many other units -- turned the vehicles around.

Shortly -- I don't know, it would have to be minutes, seconds, after we turned the vehicle around, the first building fell, the first collapse. At that point there was a car blocking the area, and I was going to attempt to turn that vehicle around. It belonged to a chief that had just passed me by. I knew that he was in front of the hotel.

I attempted to walk towards the hotel, but just as I attempted to do that the -- I don't know what you'd call it, that mushroom, avalanche thing was coming at us. I turned around and called to my partner. We got back in the vehicle and started to pull away from the scene.

But just at that point, somebody was pounding on the glass on the back doors of the ambulance. I looked through the rearview mirror, and I saw a man in a hazmat suit. But I couldn't stop the vehicle because something would have happened to either the vehicle or him.

So I sort of motioned to him, but I don't know if he saw me, that I knew he was there on the back bumper of the ambulance. So I drove off, but I drove off at a steady pace so that I wouldn't knock him -- he wouldn't fall off.

I pulled a few blocks up from there. I don't know what location that was. As I attempted to go around to the back of the vehicle, I saw the man that was on the back bumper. He was a sergeant from hazmat, Port Authority. At that point he thanked me. He said that I saved his life because he couldn't run anymore.

We then proceeded to treat him, my partner and I. We just did the normal protocol for something like that. He was covered in dust. As my partner was treating him, I noticed several Fire Department personnel, firemen, walking aimlessly or sitting on the corner of where I had pulled in. I don't know the location. I was safely enough away from the first collapse to start treating patients.

So I started to take firemen off the street corners wherever I was finding them. They

were totally covered in dust, caked, caked on their eyelids. So my partner and I again started to treat. I think we treated about six people, six and EMT from a private hospital.

As we were doing that, the second tower collapsed. So everybody scattered. The patients that we were treating scattered, and they started running. As we also got in the vehicle and started to drive off. I think that's the point where I got up to Chambers Street, after the second collapse.

By that point then there was some supervisors then on the scene, and they were starting to organize things and sending everyone up to Chelsea Piers, where we then waited for further instructions.

After that I think it was like around 6:00 in the evening we were then released to go back up to the Bronx.

Q. When you were there when the south tower came down, did you feel anything? Was there any indication that the tower was coming down?

A. No. The first tower?

Q. Right.

A. No, no.

Q. When the second tower --

A. I just happened to be looking up or out towards that direction of the buildings when all of a sudden we just noticed that it just dropped straight down. Then it got really dark, real dark. Things were flying through the air.

I looked up at the building, and before I realized what I was seeing I thought it was paper floating through the air. It was people jumping from high up, way up high. But then at that point we had left that first location of Vesey and West.

Q. So now when the north tower now collapsed, did you feel anything?

A. No.

Q. Were you just --

A. I saw the antenna start to come down, because again -- the vehicle was facing north, so we were at the back of the ambulance treating patients, facing south. The towers were in our eye view, so I saw the antenna go down. I don't know if that was the first building or the second

building.

Q. I think that was on the south tower. That was probably the first building.

A. The first building, yes. I saw the antenna start to slide, but we thought at that point that it was going to topple over, not go straight down.

The second tower I just recall seeing it fall, a cloud of dust.

Q. The radio communications, were you guys directed to use a certain frequency?

A. We were directed to monitor citywide frequency. There wasn't supposed to be any transmissions. I followed the those directions; I think it's only because of the experience that I had. I have 25 years in the street, 21 of them with EMS.

Because of my going to mock disaster drills at the airport for my own reasons, because when I was working on that side of the Bronx, the unit I was working was one of the first units that would have gone to an airport incident. So I attended those for my own reasons.



[REDACTED] D. DeMARCO [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And as far as monitoring the radio and not talking over the frequency, I had enough experience to know what to do and how to handle it. So I began giving instructions to my partner. We did paperwork. Not a lot of people did that. We did ACRs, we did log sheets, we kept track of everybody that we treated.

Unfortunately every time the building collapsed or we got word that we had to move from the scene, those patients scattered. But I found that I ran into two of those patients at least twice that morning in different locations, one of



which had to be -- eventually was transported to the hospital. Another one was a fireman that I took off the street corner and treated with that dust, and then a medic unit came and took him to the hospital, somewhere up around Chambers Street at that point.

That's about it, really. I just thank God that I had the sense enough to take care of myself and my partner, or it would have been a disaster. Who knows. I was so close.

MR. MURAD: This concludes the interview. I would like to thank EMT Diane DeMarco. The time now is 820 hours, and this concludes the interview. Thank you very much

File No. 9110332

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT DWIGHT SCOTT

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. MURAD: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 74545 hours. I am Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York, and I am conducting an interview with --

EMT SCOTT: Dwight Scott.

MR. MURAD: And your rank and your command, please?

EMT SCOTT: EMT from Battalion 15.

MR. MURAD: This interview is being conducted at 4109 White Plains Road, Battalion 15. This is regarding the events on September 11th, 2001.

Q. EMT Dwight Scott, can you please give us your perspective on that day?

A. I was on a call, minor injury call. Then I heard somebody -- the dispatcher said for us to go on citywide, monitor, don't say anything. I went 82 to the hospital. Then when I got to the hospital, I saw a lot of people around the television. I went and looked and I saw the plane had hit the World Trade Center.

After finishing the call, we went back to the battalion. I asked my lieutenant are we

going to be assigned to the World Trade Center. He said, "As a matter of fact, you've already been assigned." So I grabbed some extra equipment, put it on my ambulance. We continued to go to the World Trade Center.

On the way there we heard a lot of people crying for help, some people saying, "Mayday, mayday, mayday. My ambulance is crushed. I can't find my partner."

So I started to speed up a little bit more. We finally got there, and I saw -- the last tower was still standing. I went forward, tried to advance as much as I can down to the site.

Q. Do you know where you were or did you see any officers or were you just actually operating on your own?

A. When we got there at first we saw officers. There were different groups of command. We kind of advanced until we saw somebody that we knew. They told us what was going on. They told us to pretty much just stay put so they could account for people as they're -- we were setting up a command post.

That's when the building started to come down.  
Then we had to retreat north.

I was on the West Side Highway by Vesey and West. We started to help firefighters that were injured. We saw a couple of them running by themselves from a huge cloud, the smoke and the dust. We started to help them, irrigate their eyes, help walking wounded. We started to bring them to the triage station.

Then after that we heard another unit; they were crying for help. We didn't know where they were. We tried to advance to where they said they might have been, but there was so much smoke and dust that we had to retreat.

When the building started to collapse, we pretty much just got up and just ran.

Q. Which building? That was the north tower at that time?

A. The last one.

Q. The north tower?

A. The north tower. The north tower -- I was at the bus. As a matter of fact, I even made a pact with my partner that if a chief tells us to split up we would never split up. When the

north tower collapsed, he started running one way. I called for him and said, "Come on, Melvin, Melvin." He couldn't hear me. He just started running.

The ambulance was idling, so I jumped in the ambulance and just started driving and drove until everything was quiet. Then I turned around. Melvin, he had jumped in another ambulance.

Q. Melvin is who? Your partner?

A. Yeah.

Q. What's Melvin's last name?

A. Rodriguez.

Q. Rodriguez?

A. Yes.

After we met up again, we went back to another command post. Then they said there was a secondary explosion or they weren't sure if it was a bomb or a gas main. But we all started running again. We went north. After that we regrouped and set up another triage station farther from the site.

We pretty much stayed around there because we weren't sure what was going to happen.

We didn't want to lose any more people. So we stayed around.

Q. When you went down where you were at that time, can you just specify?

A. After the secondary explosion?

Q. Right.

A. It was somewhere by -- what's that big complex?

Q. The Winter Garden? American Express building?

A. It was further back, further north.

Q. To Church Street?

A. Chelsea Pier, Chelsea Pier. We went to Chelsea Pier. We pretty much stayed there because they were thinking about secondary devices or something might happen.

Q. Was there any officers that were at that time operating there once you guys were regrouped over there?

A. Yes, there were officers there, and they took our name and unit number. They tried to keep us accountable like to where they were and where they wanted us and which direction they wanted us to keep the ambulance just in case we

have to run again.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. I'll just say that was one of the worst experiences I've ever seen in my life, and I hope I don't see anything like that again.

Q. Were you guys operating on a radio frequency?

A. Yes.

Q. How were the radio communications?

A. We were on citywide.

Q. How were the communications?

A. Communications I think were pretty good. On citywide. They did try to keep that channel open just in case. There wasn't a lot of confusion like the other channels where everybody's talking.

Q. When you were down at Chelsea Pier when everyone regrouped -- when you guys regrouped, were you then given an assignment or were you told just to stay there or what was the actions of everybody?

A. Pretty much to stay, to stand fast, because we weren't sure what kind of danger we might be in. We weren't sure what kind of danger



we might be in, so they pretty much kept us at bay so just in case anything happened they wouldn't lose any more members.

Q. All right. Anything else you feel you want to add? All right.

A. Unless you have other questions.

Q. No, you mostly answered them, where you guys regrouped, what frequencies you were operating on, did you see anybody. Any individual person that came to mind that you saw that comes to your mind or was it just you and your partner most of the time?

A. When you say people, like victims or --

Q. Well, if you knew some victims or EMS people or fire people.

A. Yes, a couple of people that we work with, a couple firefighters from our area.

Q. Do you know the names of the EMS people or just you know them by sight?

A. Just by sight.

Q. So just by sight?

A. Just by sight.

Q. All right. You know some of the firemen that were responding down there?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. EMT Dwight Scott, I'd like to  
thank you?

MR. MURAD: The time now is 755 hours,  
and this concludes the interview. Thank  
you.

File No. 9110333

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ROBERT RUIZ

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is December 14th, 2001. The time is 11:35. I'm George Cundari of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

PARAMEDIC RUIZ: My name is Robert Ruiz. I'm a paramedic with the Fire Department of New York, and I work at Battalion 26 in the Bronx.

Q. Paramedic Ruiz, can you please tell us the events of September 11th from your recollection, please?

A. That morning we had just taken a patient to Bronx Lebanon Hospital, and we had just cleared from the hospital when the dispatcher sent us the assignment to respond down to Manhattan. It was kind of odd because we work all the way up in the Bronx. They don't ever send Bronx units into Manhattan.

So we were wondering what it was. So we switched to citywide frequency. That's when we found out something was going on in Manhattan.

We still didn't know what it was. So we turned on the news, and we listened to 1010. That's when we found out that a plane had struck one of the twin towers.

At that point me and my partner -- we didn't think it was terrorism or anything like that. We just thought maybe it was some sort of a problem with the controls or something like that.

Anyway, we started responding downtown. On the way there, halfway there, we hear the news that a second plane crashed into the World Trade Center. Right then and there we both knew that it had to be terrorists because what are the odds of two planes crashing into two separate buildings.

So we're driving there. There's a lot of traffic, a lot of police, a really long line of fire trucks, unmarked cars and ambulances and everything.

Q. How were you getting there? What route did you take?

A. We ended up taking the Grand Concourse all the way up to the FDR Drive and then the FDR

Drive all the way down. We ended up having to get off around 34th Street, because they had blocked off all the -- the traffic wasn't moving, so one of the fire trucks blocked all the traffic and everybody just went.

From there everybody just split. Everybody just took their own routes. We took a pretty good one, so we got there maybe ten minutes after that.

Q. So you took West Street from there?

A. Right there from 34th Street? Yes. We took -- what's the name of that street that's right by South Street Seaport underneath the drive? I don't know what street that is.

Q. Allen?

A. The one that runs underneath the FDR Drive, that street there, like the New York Post.

Q. Pike?

A. Right, right where the South Street Seaport, you know, where the mall is at. So we ended up taking that street all the way down. It was pretty clear, I remember. So we ended up going through there.

As soon as we got there, we went inside

the tunnel underneath Battery Park, and we came out on the other side. When we came out on the other side, it was like -- we already saw the building on fire from way uptown, maybe 125th Street. As we got closer and closer it was like, wow, it was amazing. The second plane had already hit, so we never saw it when that happened. But we already saw the two buildings in flame. But as we got closer and closer, you see it better and better.

So when we came out of the tunnel on the other side, we were right there. It was incredible. We were just amazed that this had happened.

As we see, there's a line forming of ambulances up on West Street and -- it is West Street, but it wasn't Liberty. There was another street there. What's the next street after Liberty?

Q. Still south of the World Trade Center?

A. Yes. It wasn't Liberty, because -- or could it have been Liberty? Was it just that big? Oh, yeah, so it was Liberty. There had to be like another bridge there. I remember the

bridge.

Q. There's a walkway over here by Vesey.

A. I remember this. That's where we were.

Okay.

There's a couple of commanders, chiefs, captains at Liberty and West Street. We came out of the tunnel, and we ended up on the West Side Highway. We went up to the back of the line. Before we got to the back of the line, like people describe it, there were body parts all over the floor.

I saw pieces of scalp and entire torsos and legs, hands, just about everything. I never saw a face, but I saw just about every other part you can think of. It was like an obstacle course to get to this line that they had formed at Liberty and West Street.

It can't be Liberty and West Street. It has to be like right by the hotel. Right over here, right in that corner, that's where it was. The line didn't start on Liberty and West Street; it was a little bit further up, maybe by the Marriott. Maybe right around there, maybe a little bit before that.



Q. So you're right by the towers at that point?

A. No, we never made it to the towers. I'm going to tell you what happened.

It was like an obstacle course to get to the end of the line, to the back of the line. What they were doing is they were getting patients, throwing them in the back of the bus, and then the bus would just take off.

Q. These are all walking wounded coming to you?

A. That's right.

Then the captains and chiefs, they were directing people everywhere. It was total chaos. So that's just what we did.

As soon as we got to the back of the line, these firemen come running from the building right on Liberty and -- right on Liberty and West Street, there's a building there. I'm not quite sure whether it was a church or not. It didn't look like a church. I remember it had a lot of scaffolding on it.

They come running from the building, and he starts yelling at us. He said, "Help,

help, help, we need your help. One of our guys got hit with some debris that fell off a building." My partner was driving that day and he said, "Okay, no problem."

We get off the line, and we park right on Liberty Street now. Right on Liberty Street, there's a parking lot there. He parks there, gets out of the bus, runs to the back and gets a trauma bag. He goes, gets the trauma bag and runs out and goes inside the building.

Now, I get out. I jumped inside the back of the bus, and I'm getting the rest of the equipment. I'm getting the oxygen bag, I've got the monitor, I've got a couple trauma dressings and stuff, and I'm putting it on top of the stretcher. I jumped out with the stretcher and everything.

I go to the building where he went, but there's a few entrances on that corner and I don't know where exactly he went. So I see some firemen almost on the other side of the building on the other corner. I go and I approached them and said, "Which way did my partner go?" He said, "We don't know what you're talking about."

So now my partner's inside the building, and he probably needs the equipment and I don't know where he is.

Q. What's your partner's name?

A. Joe Jefferson.

I can't tell you the times that all this is happening because I really --

Q. Time is lost?

A. Right, time is lost. All I know is that the building hadn't fallen yet.

So I approached these guys. They told me they don't know who I'm talking about and whatever. So what I do is I end up standing right in the middle, because if he comes out of any exit I can just run to him, throw the guy on the stretcher and just leave from there. So that was the plan.

As I'm waiting there -- I must have waited a good five minutes. Then the firemen I had just spoken to, they go and they run into the World Trade Center number two. So they run across the street into the building.

Right after them, you see three FBI agents, two men and a woman, run right after

them, and they also go inside the World Trade Center. I'm just standing right there in the center, and I'm looking up. I'm like, oh, man, you know, just dumbfounded. This is such an amazing sight.

I don't know what else I was thinking. It was just incredible. It was just one of those things you look at and you just have your mouth wide open saying, "I can't believe I'm here witnessing something like this." I said, man, you know, this is real history, and wondering where my partner is and what's the matter with this guy.

All of a sudden I see a plain clothes cop come and stand right on the corner. So this is now Washington and Liberty. He's right on that corner, and he's looking up. He looks at me, and we just both nod in disbelief. We just keep staring like -- this happened in a matter of like five minutes, the firemen running in, the FBI right behind and then the plain clothes cop on the corner.

The next thing you know, you hear a loud thundering noise. It sounded like a jet, a

big rumble. I start looking around and I'm like, what is that? The next thing I know, I see the cop just take off. I'm like, where's he going?

Then I see the things on the floor, like Liberty -- you know, just like the movies, bouncing up and jumping and shaking. I mean, not like an earthquake, like a 6 point something or something like that. But you see stuff on the floor shaking from side to side. I'm like, oh, my God. I look up and I was saying, oh, no, the building's going to fall down.

Let me tell you, you talk about being scared, never in my life -- I don't think ever again I'll ever be so scared. So I turn around. Right where I'm standing I turn around. I'm in the center of the building. I turn around, and I try to go inside the building, but that door happens to be locked. So I run towards the corner where the cop was, and I keep trying all the doors.

All the doors and all the windows are locked, and I can't break any of the windows to get in because they have metal gates on them. So even if I was to break a window to get in, I

can't get in. So I keep running, running, keep trying the doors.

I make it to the corner. I make it to the corner, and I turn right. So I was going to keep running all the way straight up Washington. So I ran maybe a few feet when I tripped and I fell on something, some debris. I don't know what it was. But I ended up falling.

By now the sound is just getting louder and louder and louder. I said, oh, man, this building is going to fall on me right now. What do I do? I got up, and I just -- this is like a split second. I said I can't keep running straight up, because you have this building right here on Washington. What is it? Bankers Trust Plaza, 130 Liberty Street? It takes up the entire block. So I can't run like in a diagonal.

What I wanted to do is I didn't want to run straight up; I wanted to go diagonally to get out of the -- because I figured this building was falling, it was tumbling over. I didn't think it was falling down on top of itself.

Q. So you had a feeling the building was coming down right away?

A. Yeah.

Q. Is that what you first thought?

A. Yeah. The sound, it's just loud. At first it's (sound) and then you feel everything around you -- not around you but the floor. You feel the floor trembling and shaking. You look at the floor, the dirt, the sand and everything on the floor shifting from side to side. I'm like, oh, man.

Then the cop takes off. He runs. Then I hit the corner, I turn the corner, a few feet I fall. By this time the sound is so, so, so loud, I think oh, my God. I never looked back, because I figured if I looked back that was going to be it, I'd freeze or be hit with something. I said, look, I don't want to waste any time. Whatever it is I'm going to do, I've got to do it quickly.

So I saw the building. I saw that I couldn't run. I saw that if I kept running straight -- the map here, it doesn't look big at all. But this was like a really long block for me to keep running and running and running and go around the corner on the other side.

So what I ended up doing was there was

a door right on that corner, and the door was locked. It also had a gate, a wrought iron fence gate. I kept trying to open, open, open, open, and I couldn't open. I said, oh, my God, this is going to be it.

The way they made the door is it's like a cutout in the building. It's like about a foot wide of wall before you hit the door. So it was like a little corner. What I ended up doing was I ended up hiding inside that little corner there. I ended up going inside that little door well and hiding up against the wall facing the World Trade Center building and hiding right in that corner.

As soon as I did that, the next thing I know, all the dust; the dust, the dirt. I said, oh, my God, this is it. That's all I kept thinking: Oh, my God, oh, my God, I'm going to die here. This building's going to fall on top of me. It's going to fall on top of this building and squash it and this is it. All you hear is all this rumbling. The rumbling, the rumbling, the rumbling, that's all you heard. The rumbling and the smoke.



In a matter of seconds it was from daytime to complete, complete darkness, something straight out of a movie.

Q. So that doorway protected you?

A. Yeah. It saved my life.

But while I was in there, I was getting hit with stuff. You heard it, and you heard glass breaking and stuff -- there was so much noise, you couldn't distinguish one thing happening. But when it happened close to me, I could hear it, like glass breaking.

But the biggest problem there was I couldn't breathe. The smoke was really, really hot, and I couldn't catch my breath. So I ended up taking off my shirt and wrapping it around my face, trying to get some air, but I couldn't.

What I remember is, oh, man, I'm going to die here and -- who will protect my family. I was wondering how does it feel to be dead. That's what I remember thinking while I was stuck in that corner. I was just like I'm ready for it. I wasn't so calm like I am right now, but I remember thinking this while I was there.

The only words I remember saying is,

oh, my God oh, my God, over and over and over,  
and trying to pull the fence off so I could get  
inside, but there was no way. There was no way  
for me open the door. It was locked. I was just  
trapped there. So I was just waiting for the big  
impact that was just going to take me out.

Miraculously the building stopped  
falling. The noise completely stopped. But the  
smoke kept coming. I was having a real, real bad  
time breathing. The shirt wrapped around my face  
wasn't helping at all, because it was saturated  
in that dust as well.

I'm saying, oh, my God, what do I do?  
Do I stay here? Do I try to run out? But then I  
thought if I run out of that little corner I'm  
going to get hit with the rest of the stuff  
that's flying. I was trapped there.

Like things weren't bad enough already,  
the car that's parked right on that corner  
catches on fire. I don't mean a little fire, the  
entire thing. Don't ask me how. The entire car  
caught on fire. You would think maybe just a  
motor part or just the engine part. But this  
entire car just goes up in fire.

I'm like, oh, my God, what's happening? I didn't get squashed and I'm going to suffocate here and now I'm going to burn. The smoke was real hot. The smoke was real, real hot. I thought about, oh, man, if I keep breathing the smoke in, my larynx is going to swell and I'm going to suffocate like that, and all attached to crazy things I'm thinking. Forget about it.

Now it was the car. Then I can't stand it anymore because it's getting real, real, real hot. I'm like, oh, man, I've got to get out of here. This thing is cooking me. Now thanks to the car fire -- because it was so big, I could see now. Before then I couldn't see anything. It was literally like people say you stick your hand right in front of your face and you couldn't see it. Now with this car fire, I could see a few feet in front of me.

I got out of the door well there, and I walked a little bit. I notice that there were windows there as well, but the windows had gates on them. All the stuff that fell knocked the gates off the building. So the windows weren't there anymore, the gates weren't there.

All I had to do was break a little bit of glass that was left there, and I ended up jumping inside the building, because you couldn't walk in the street. I was right along like the edge. It's really hard to describe. It was like a mountain of stuff.

I was walking right alongside the building, and I ended up going inside there. There was no gate. I tried to remember where were the gates, and I didn't see the gates at all. That whole corner was full of windows with gates.

It turns out that it was a restaurant. The only reason I know is I ended up going inside of it. I must have been there like a good 20 minutes, because I couldn't find my way around. I kept falling over tables and chairs. That's how I found out it was a restaurant. At one time I tried to yell for help. I was like, "Help!" I said, oh, man, what am I doing? I am the help here. Who's going to help me?

Q. Nobody answered while you were in there?

A. No, no, there was nobody there. The

people, I guess when the first plane hit, locked up and just took off.

So I'm in there a good 15 minutes, good 20 minutes, and I'm trying to find my way around. It's like you've got no sense of coordination because you don't know in which direction you're going. You're just bouncing into stuff and trying to look for a wall. I remember feeling a counter. Then I would fall on a table or trip on a table, on a chair, get back up.

Q. Was your radio working at this point?

A. I'm going to get to that right now.

So then when I yell for help, I'm like, oh, man, there's nobody here. So I go and I reach for my radio, but there's no more radio. I don't know where the radio is, where it went. Don't ask me where I lost it.

I usually keep my radio real secure. That's something I've always had that -- ever since I started working there, I always kept the radio secure. I don't know, I lost it, maybe when I fell or maybe climbing in through the window or I had already fallen a few times.

The reason I was yelling for help was

because I still hear stuff falling. You could still hear stuff falling. I said, man, I don't know if the whole building fell. I didn't know what the story was.

I thought at that point that only half the building had fallen off, because I was still there. I said, oh, my God, only half the building fell. The rest of the building is going to fall. I thought it maybe broke in half and just fell down. I didn't think it just crumbled onto itself.

Anyway, I start feeling around, and I see a light. I was saying, oh, yeah, that's the way out. I ended up walking towards the light. It's kind of silly. It ended up being a refrigerator full of Snapple. It was kind of stupid. Oh, man, I got so mad when I saw that.

Q. Did you need a drink?

A. No, I didn't want a drink. I tell everybody that part about the Snapple. I said, you know, I thought it was light. I thought it was the way out, and it turns out to be a giant refrigerator full of Snapple. I got so mad at that point.

Anyway, I turn around and I end up looking inside there. I eventually find a little corridor, and I followed the corridor all the way, all the way, all the way. I ended up coming out in the same building, but I ended up coming out on some windows further south on Washington.

So now I'm in between the block. I'm halfway in the building. So I ended up coming out of some broken windows that were there. Now I'm on Washington again. I look back, and I look at everything that was -- and I could still see where it was, because of the fires. It was just like a movie. There were fires scattered all over.

I remember there was a row of police cars, and they were all smashed. I was like, remember that plain clothes cop that was running? There could have been no way that he made it, because the guy was right in front of me. I'm talking about he was right there. I'm right behind him. I fall, I get back up, I hide inside that little corner, and then everything just starts falling.

So I was like, oh, man, that poor guy.

I was even thinking of maybe even trying to look for him. It was like you couldn't see anything there.

So I got out of the window, and I walked down Washington -- I didn't walk. What am I saying I walked? I ran. As soon as I got out, I ran. I ran and ran and ran and ran and ran. I ended up at the entrance to the tunnel. Where is the entrance of the tunnel here?

Q. It's off the page here.

A. Let me tell you how I ran. But I ran and ran, and finally I could see the light. When I got to where the tunnel was, I'm looking everywhere. It was just like that movie the day after with the atomic bomb. They drop it and nobody's left and I'm the only one. That's exactly how it was.

I'm looking and like, "Hello?" I'm looking. "Anybody?" No cars moving, no birds, not one other person, nothing at all. Everything's abandoned, everything's left, and I'm just stuck there. I'm like, oh, my God, what do I do? I said, what do I do now?

Then I remembered Jefferson. I was



like, oh, my God, Jefferson. What happened to Jefferson? What I ended up doing is when I hit that tunnel, I ended up going back on West Street. I was still trying to catch my breath, so I was taking it easy. But I started walking back to that building where I was.

I'm coughing, I'm coughing, I'm walking and everything. As I started getting closer and closer, that's when I start seeing people. I start seeing people scattered everywhere: a fireman here, a guy in a business suit there; just very, very little people.

When I got to the building that I was in but on the other side -- we're now on West Street -- I go in. As soon as I go in, who's behind the door? Jefferson. He's in there. I'm like, oh, man. But I didn't recognize him because the guy was completely black. What he was doing, he was helping out one of our other guys who got hit with stuff and had something stuck in his chest and he had broken his arm.

So there was him and maybe three or four other guys attending to him. So he was hurt, and somebody else was hurt that I remember.

I didn't really pay too much attention because I was still trying to catch my breath.

All this happens real quickly. I was stuck in the building for a while. But as soon as I got out, I ran, went to the tunnel entrance and ended up going back to the other side of the building. I find them. They're taking care of him.

So they ended up taking this guy, throwing him in an ambulance that didn't get smashed. Our bus was completely totaled, because we were parked right here on Liberty. It's demolished. So they take him out and put him inside an ambulance, and they take off. So everybody ends up leaving.

Now, Jefferson comes back to see how I am. When he comes back in there, it's completely empty. Now all of a sudden we see this big group of people come out; I'd say about maybe 15 people, about 17 people. I'm like, oh, man, we thought we were in there all by ourselves.

Somebody had brought a bucket, and it had water in it. I just stayed by the bucket, trying to drink some water. I tried to clear my

passages out, because I couldn't breathe. I was coughing, coughing up that black stuff.

Anyway, so these people come out of a closet or there was a doorway or something. We're like, oh, my God, what are you people doing here? We started talking to them. They told us to leave, but then the building started coming down and we got scared and they hid.

There was a lady with a baby, a guy with some cats, some other guys that said they were students from I don't know where, and there was this other girl, an EMT, from Metro Care.

What we ended up doing is me and Jefferson, we end up leaving the building. I'm feeling a little better now than I did originally from the smoke and stuff. So I take the T-shirt off. No, that's a lie. Someone takes a T-shirt off and rips it, and now we make masks out of that. We put these white pieces of -- we put it on our face to try to protect ourselves from the smoke.

We go and we end up walking back on the West Side Highway. We leave those people there with the EMT from Metro Care. We end up walking

a little bit. What we were going to try to do was to try to find -- oh, no, that's a lie. Oh, my God, I can't believe I forgot it.

Even before we found that, we found the people. As soon as we found the people, we hear it again, the rumbling. Right, I forgot all about that. We hear the rumbling. I was like, oh, my God, Joe, the rest of the building is falling down.

We all run, and we all try to get as much as we can inside this building where we are now. We hide in a closet or something. The walls are all full of glass. So we're thinking that this glass is going to break. All you see is the thing moving. Later on we found out that was the second building that was falling down. We thought and I thought that the first one is still -- the rest of it is falling down.

So anyway, when this one finished falling, we waited a little while. Then that's when we came out. That's when we came out. We must have walked for maybe a block or two. We found a school bus there, like one of those mini school buses.

So we go in, and we were looking at all the cars to see if we could find some transportation or something. We were picking up equipment as we went along. We found a radio, we found gloves, we found a life pack, a bag. We were picking up equipment as we went along.

So we end up finding a school bus. We go inside the school bus, and we find a lady inside there hiding. Why this lady didn't turn the school bus around and leave that area, I don't know. I guess everybody handles it differently. So we told the lady that we were going to borrow her school bus.

So what we end up doing is we end up taking the school bus. Joe jumps in the driver's seat, and we end up going as close as we can to this building. Now, we go in there, and we end up taking all those people out, throwing them in the school bus and then just taking off.

So we end up taking off, and we end up driving back down the West Side Highway to the tunnel and all the way around to the FDR Drive. Now, we end up taking the drive all the way up to Bellevue Hospital.

Once we got to Bellevue Hospital, we dropped the people off. Then me and Joe talked it over, what are we going to do now? Are we going to go home? I was like, I don't know. I don't know. What do you want to do? We talked about it for a few minutes. I said, look, let's go back. We just wanted to go back to help, see what we could do.

We ended up getting back in the school bus, and the lady doesn't want to go back down there, and we don't blame her. So what we end up doing, we left her and the school bus by the Brooklyn Bridge, and from the Brooklyn Bridge we had the life pack and we had the monitor we had found. We had the life pack and the trauma bag that we had found. We ended up walking all the way back down to the twin towers site.

When we got back to the twin towers site, it was still a lot of smoke but not like when everything had initially fallen down. So what we end up doing is me and the firemen that were there, whoever was left, we end up just digging. We just started digging.

A chief came by -- I forget who it

was -- and he tried to make a team, tried to make teams of groups of people, but those things just fell apart. As soon as he left, everybody decided to do what they wanted to do.

Me and Jefferson decided to stay together and, when the smoke cleared, just started digging. Then there's like no way to dig. All we can do is walk around and try to listen to see if you heard something.

It looked like somebody had taken like a broomstick and taken all the debris and everything and pushed it all the way up onto the buildings that were across the street from the World Trade Center.

This street was more or less clean, like the highway, right around here was like a giant mountain. I don't know what building it was, this building right here. Everything had piled up over here, up on top of the buildings over here.

So we ended up staying there. We found a couple of helmets from people, firemen. One EMS helmet, we ended up taking that one back to the station. That's what we did all day.

Then around 6, 7:00, my leg was hurting, my shoulder was hurting, this whole side. I couldn't hardly walk. I was like I can't really move my arm anymore. Joe said, "Do you want to go to the emergency room?" I said, "I don't know."

I ended up pulling up my pant leg, and my calf must have been the size of a grapefruit -- no, bigger. It was real swollen. I decided to go to the emergency room. This is like about 6:00, 6 p.m. or 6:30.

So we ended up walking there too, because there was no transportation at all. We went to New York Downtown Hospital. We end up going to that hospital. They rush me in. They rush my partner in. They asked us, "What happened to you? Where do you feel pain?" I said, "I feel pain in my leg, my knee. I feel pain in my shoulder, right here in my ribs."

They take my clothes off, start examining me, and say, "Oh, yeah, your leg is pretty bad." They started looking at my shoulder, and they said, "It looks like you might have broken a bone here or something."



When all this had happened earlier, I didn't feel anything. I don't know why it was. They took x-rays and found out that my collar bone was broken. They said I broke the AC joint as well. They said no broken bones in my legs or my ribs or anything, just the shoulder got messed up.

The only thing I can think of is that little piece of wall that didn't hide me completely, because it wasn't wide enough, so I imagine maybe something -- I remember stuff flying everywhere and falling next to me, but I don't remember feeling pain or getting hit with anything. Maybe it's because I couldn't breathe or what it was.

While we were taking the people out of the building and while we were looking for stuff, trying to find anybody that we can find in the rubble or anything, looking inside cars and all types of -- nothing. I was walking with a little limp, but I thought it was just nothing until later on during the day.

From there, once I got discharged from the hospital -- they put my arm in a sling and

told me to put I believe heat on and then after that put cold and then go see an orthopedic doctor the next day, they gave me somebody to go see.

Now it was how do I get home?

Q. Did you ever end up calling home all that time?

A. I tried to call -- I ended up -- oh, this is so funny. I had a cell phone in my pocket. After we came back from Bellevue, I said let me try to call home. The cell phones weren't working. Everything was completely -- I'm telling you, it was completely shut down.

After maybe an hour or two, I got a signal, so I ended up calling. It just so happens that I hadn't charged my phone. So I was on low cells. So I called my girlfriend. She picked up the phone and she said, "How are you?"

It's so funny, because on my way down to the World Trade Center I called her and I was like, "Look, I'm going down to the World Trade Center." She said, "No, don't go." I was like, "Look, they told me to go. They assigned me there." She's like, "Be careful, be careful."

Then from there she never heard from me again.

Now I said, "Oh, you don't know what's happened to me. Oh, my God, I almost died." I'm trying to tell her the story. I said, "Look, it's going to cut off." It cuts off, and then that was it.

That's when everything else started. We started looking for people and stuff like that. I took about an hour or two taking -- I had a lot of glass in my hands. My hands are fine now, but they were destroyed. I don't know how I got so much glass in my hand. I figured maybe I was trying to break the glass with my hands or something, but I don't remember.

I don't know, but my hands, if you saw them, they looked like -- they were completely messed up. So there I was, trying to irrigate and going through every cut, picking the glass out of my hands. That took about an hour.

Then we would go and look inside cars, look inside the fire engines, the flipped-over SUVs, everything. There was really nothing we could do, just the little bit we did. We took those people out of that building, so I guess we

did a little bit of our part.

As far as finding anybody after that, nothing. Then when I got discharged from the emergency room, we had no way to get home. We were stranded, so we started walking. Jefferson ran into somebody that works there at New York Downtown Hospital. They said they would try to get us as far as Bellevue and then from there maybe we could get a ride from one of our own units there.

As it turns out, they didn't call them right away. I don't think they were logged on or whatever the case was. They ended up taking us all the way to the station. You don't know how happy I was when I heard that he was going to do that favor for us, because by that time I had really had just about enough by the end of the day.

So we get to the station, and there's just a giant crowd of people. Everybody that works at the station was like, "Oh, my God, we thought you guys were dead. We thought you guys were just --" I guess they might have done roll call on the radio, something like that, and they

hadn't heard from us.

So when they saw us, they were happy, clapping. I told the story once, and then that was it. I was like I really don't want to talk about it anymore. I just want to go home.

By that time Jefferson had lent me his phone and I had called my family, and they were on their way there. So I was in five or ten minutes and they got there. My girlfriend Tamara, my brother, my sister, they all came. They hugged me and everything.

It was definitely something I don't ever want to live through again. That's how the day ended. That was my World Trade Center experience.

Q. Thank you for taking the time to conduct this interview.

MR. CUNDARI: It is 12:12, and this concludes this interview.

File No. 9110334

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT KEVIN McLEON

Interview Date: December 15, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today is December 15, 2001. The time is 25 minutes past the hour of 12. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and shield number.

EMT McLEON: EMT Kevin McLeon, 5758.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A. That morning I was late for work. I got stuck in traffic and was late for work. The alarm had gone on as soon as I got here. We pulled up the block, and we were a block from the station when we realized there was something going on. There was a large crowd gathering in the street.

We parked our ambulance and we got out of the ambulance, and we looked up and we realized the World Trade Center was on fire.

That's when the calls started coming in.

My partner managed to get us on the call, with all the radio traffic, and we responded down to the World Trade Center. In doing so started to hear all the mass confusion about what was going on. Lieutenant Davila was the first lieutenant down on the scene, screaming for EMS units, crying that this was a hard hat operation. We knew something was really going on.

As we got closer to the World Trade Center, we realized this is really something of a large magnitude we have never seen before. We pull up 84, and we were actually on the opposite side of where the staging was, which probably saved our lives.

Davila was on one side of the station, one side of the building, and we were on the other side. We got out and started to pull our equipment out.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map provided approximately where you parked your vehicle?

A. Church and maybe Cortlandt, Dey,



somewhere.

Q. Okay. So Church, somewhere in between Cortlandt and Dey?

A. Somewhere in between there.

Q. Okay. And you were in vehicle --

A. 69.

Q. -- 69. Thank you.

A. We pulled our equipment out and started to stage in front of the building. We started to distribute equipment for triage. We had one or two patients who had a piece of the building that fell on his shoulder. We started to bring him to ambulance when all of a sudden we heard a large explosion. That explosion turned out to be subsequently the second plane hitting.

We threw him and two other patients in the back of the ambulance and started to do triage in the back of the ambulance. It was a safe haven. We ended up driving three more patients. The last patient was a burn patient. Since she really couldn't wait around, we decided to take the five that we had, hit our 82 and go to the hospital.

Q. What hospital did you transport these

patients to?

A. We went to Cornell.

Q. Cornell?

A. The burn patient we had had second and third degree burns. It has a really good trauma center. So for the first time we went to Cornell. When we got to Cornell, that's when we heard the towers had collapsed.

We quickly finished what we had at Cornell, made our way back down to -- we started making our way down and managed to get down to South and -- it was South of Canal, near the seaport. We were down there. You could see the towers had collapsed and saw the smoke and all the people running out towards us. We were just bogged down in so much traffic we couldn't get through. .

We couldn't get our way through because of all the traffic and all the people. We had been hearing there were three staging areas being set up. We managed to stage at Chelsea Piers.

But from that point on we managed to get ourselves up to Chelsea Piers. We didn't do anything for the rest of the day. We sat there

and we waited like bumps on logs. That was our claim to fame. That's all we really did.

Q. When you initially arrived on the scene, were there other people at your location when you arrived on Church between Dey and --

A. There were other BLS units and a couple of medic units from Cabrini on the same side as we were. They had already started to set up a triage and gather patients.

Q. Do you know any of these other people? Would you know them by name?

A. I remember seeing one of them, a guy named Andy, who was a medic. I remember him. We also started to gather our patients. Then when we heard the large explosion, we took all we had, put them in our ambulances, and waited for it to die down a couple more seconds, got out, gathered more patients. Then I split, and after that I don't know what anybody did.

Q. Do you know approximately what time it was that you went 82?

A. It was probably somewhere in the area of 9 -- somewhere around 9:30, 9:40, because actually we were up -- at 10 to 10 we were

already up at Cornell with the five people, the five patients. We were up at Cornell probably about quarter to 10, 10 to 10. We were up at Cornell already, because we stayed there long enough to hear the buildings had collapsed.

I guess it was gut-wrenching to know we couldn't get closer down to the scene as we wanted and wound up getting sent down to Chelsea Piers and then we sat there doing absolutely nothing for the rest of the day, when you're knowing that people from our own station were down at the site doing more than you.

That was really it. That was -- I took care of five people. That's it.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview? Anything at all?

A. We'll never see something like this again for the rest of our lives. My partner and I really were more mad at the fact that we couldn't get down there. We both knew we did the right thing for our patients, especially the burn victim, because if the burn victim didn't come along, we were going to go to the nearest trauma center, dump them off and then get back to the

game. She came along at the last second, and we both made the decision that she's got to go to the burn center. That's what kept us out of there.

That's about it.

Q. Okay.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 33 minutes past 12. The counter on the recorder reads 139.

Thank you very much.

File No. 9110335

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JODY BELL

Interview Date: December 15, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is December 15th, 2001. The time is 1:05 a.m. my name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and shield number.

EMT BELL: My name is Jody bell, EMT, shield number 5209.

Q. Mr. Bell, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you please tell me in your own words about the events of that day?

A. I was due in at work at 0900 hours. So being a resident from Staten Island, I commuted that day on the ferry. So I was aboard the 8:00 ferry leaving Staten Island. So I reached the city at approximately 8:30. I had my car on the ferry.

A funny thing is I bumped into my partner on the boat. Being that it was Tuesday, we were just talking about Monday night football,

just looking forward to a good day. He had just come off a three-day swing. We were just looking forward to a good day, because the weather was nice and everything was pretty good. Everything was going fine.

As I'm driving to work --

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Mike Mejias, Michael Mejias.

Q. Okay.

A. As I'm driving to work, at around a quarter to, I noticed that the traffic was getting heavy. I'm saying to myself I might be late. I'm wondering why there's all this traffic, because there's never this much traffic. This is my usual routine.

That's when we noticed a whole bunch of police cars responding somewhere. So at first we just -- we were thinking that maybe it's a bad car accident or something of that nature. My partner said he noticed people looking up in the air. I was concentrating on getting to work. I'm trying to get there on time.

As we moved closer to the battalion, we're about two blocks away, and I see all the



ambulances flying out of the station. I'm like, something's going on, man. I see my lieutenant standing in the middle of the street just like -- just flagging all the ambulances to leave. He's in a real excited state.

Q. Who was your supervisor?

A. This was Lieutenant Melarango.

So then my partner says, "Stop the car." So we stop the car in the middle of the street. He's like, "Something's going on." We jumped out of the car. We turned around, and we see the building on fire. We see the smoke coming out of the building and automatically assumed that we were bombed again, that another bomb went off in the World Trade Center, there was another attempt at trying to destroy the World Trade Center.

We immediately jumped back into the vehicle, back into my car, and we get to the station. That's when we were informed that a plane hit. A plane had hit the World Trade Center. So we're in awe. I just jumped out of the car. I left the lights on. I didn't realize that until like two days later when I tried to

start it, but that's beside the point.

I was already in uniform, and my partner wasn't. So right away the lieutenant was like, "Just get into a truck and get the fuck out of here." That's exactly what he said.

I was already addressed, and my partner ran upstairs. He said, "Just meet me out there. Be safe." I was like, "I'll meet you out there. Be safe." So I jumped into a unit with another EMT, Garfield Grey. This is my first time really meeting him. We jumped into a unit together. I think it was unit 413. We immediately proceeded over to the site. We got there about three minutes later.

Q. Do you know about what time this was?

A. The scene was insane.

I lost all track of time, to tell you the truth.

Q. Okay.

A. Once I saw that the building -- it was unreal, and I lost all track of time from there.

We proceeded over to the site, and the scene was hectic. There were people running everywhere. There were units flying everywhere.

There was debris falling. It was just the worst -- it was the worst -- the horror on the people's faces, they were scattering, running all directions.

At first we pulled the bus -- we pulled the bus onto West Street about right in front of -- I'd say right in front of One World Trade Center on West Street, close to the corner of Vesey. We were just looking at the turn of events and we said, you know what, let's go over to the other side of the West Side Highway, just to be safe, because our first move is scene safety.

So we crossed over to the other side of the West Side Highway, and we parked the bus at the corner of Vesey and West.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map with a number 1 where you parked the vehicle?

A. So we parked the unit there. We unloaded it. We threw everything we could onto the stretcher. I immediately ran to the corner. My partner said he was going to move the bus back even more to get the bus out of harm's way. At that point I didn't know where he had put the

bus.

I immediately jumped into action. I started just rounding up people, because people were running with second degree, third degree burns, half their hair burned down to the scalp. People had broken arms. They were holding limbs. It was a bad scene. I saw a couple bodies falling out of the building.

I just gathered myself within a split second, and I started gathering people to the corner. I had them all sit down, and I started triage tagging people. I was trying to listen to the radio, as I was doing all of this, to find out where a staging area could have been. I already had people -- I just started tagging people. I kind of lost track of time.

My partner came back shortly after that. My partner came back. The bus wasn't too far away. It was like a hundred yards away from us. He just jumped into action too. He started tagging people and just trying to gather people towards us.

Shortly after that nurses started arriving on the scene. I guess they had come out

of the building -- it looked like they were coming out of the World Financial Center. Anyway, there were nurses and other medical staff that were starting to arrive on the scene. Other units were starting to arrive. Everybody was trying to lend a hand.

I figure about a half hour later after we arrived we had a good 20 to 30 people on that corner we were trying to treat. We were just trying to treat them.

We then hear this explosion. We hear this explosion, and our first reaction is the plane was lodged in the building and it exploded or parts of it were still in the building and that exploded.

Then people were screaming that another plane hit. I'm like, no way, there's no way. From where I was, I couldn't see the other tower. I saw the one tower. I couldn't see the other tower. They said another plane hit. So I'm like, there's no way. More people were starting to say it. Then it came over the radio.

That's when I knew it was deliberate. I knew it was deliberate. At first I was

thinking maybe it was an accident, human error of the worst kind. But the second plane, I knew it was deliberate. I knew this was an attack. I wasn't even concentrating on that at the moment. I was just trying to gather the people.

Then the scene became even more hectic. It became even more hectic. We were just trying to do what we can. Now there were news people on the scene, more units, more hands. It was becoming a more hectic scene.

I'm not sure how much time passed after that. I lost track of time. You start to hear this rumble. You hear this rumble. Everything is shaking. Now I'm like, what the hell could that be. I'm thinking we're going to get bombed. This is an air raid.

You hear this thunder, this rumbling. Then you see the building start to come down. Everybody's like, "Run for your lives! The building is coming down!"

At that moment when that building was coming down, I was strapping a patient onto a stair chair. The thing about it was the patient was stable, but she was in a bit of hysteria. I

couldn't blame her. It was a female. She was very nervous.

So I had her sit in the chair and I put some oxygen on her, because she wasn't breathing right, she was hyperventilating. I was just trying to calm her down. I was strapping her onto the stair chair, and that's when the building comes down. So I strapped her on.

As I this tidal wave, it's like a tidal wave of soot and ash coming in my direction, my life flashed before my eyes. I made a U turn, and I started to run -- I took about ten steps, and the lady started screaming, "Don't leave me! Don't leave me!" That's when I gathered myself. I got a hold of myself, wait, what the hell am I doing?

I turned back around. I got her out of the chair. I said, "Ma'am, can you run?" She said, "Yes." She took off. I immediately made a U turn, and I've never moved so fast in my life. I don't think my feet were touching the ground. My feet weren't touching the ground.

Then shortly after that -- the building came down. It's like snow fall. The cars are

covered. The streets are covered. I'm covered and breathing in mouthfuls. You couldn't see. The scene was totally blacked out. You're just running in the direction that you think is away.

I knew I was running -- this would be westbound. I was running westbound down Vesey. I ran about a block to North End Avenue. That's when the building -- you could hear the sound. The building came down. The building finished collapsing.

So I immediately made a U turn and just ran back, because I got separated from my partner. My partner Mike, who I rode with, I had bumped into him -- between all of that I bumped into him somewhere. When other units started arriving, he had finally arrived.

So I immediately made a U turn. I ran back. Now everybody's running back: firemen, policemen, EMTs, paramedics. Everybody's running back because we've got men in there, we had equipment in there, and the people. We were just running back. That was everybody's first -- not even hesitating, just made a U turn and started heading back.



That's when over the radio you hear, "Stand fast. The north tower is leaning." I'm like, how is the north tower leaning? See, once I heard the second plane hit, I was thinking the second plane hit one building, both planes hit that one building, and that building had kind of come straight down. So all I saw was smoke coming at me and everything else, and I just ran. I still got bombarded with all of that stuff.

When I came back this time, not only was it snowing but I could see the tower, and the tower was starting to break off. It was kind of looking like it was going to tip, and there was a piece of the building coming down right on top of me and Mike. We were holding each other's hands and we were like, "Whoa, look at that."

We sat there like for a split second and we just watched it in amazement that this building was coming down, the second building was coming down. The building was hitting other buildings. It was hitting buildings over here. It was crazy.

Then we made another U turn, and everything started rumbling again. Another tidal

wave blacked out the whole scene. This time it was worse. We were just running. This time we ran all the way back as far as we could to the railing. I was damn near ready to jump in the river. I swear to God, I was holding the railing, looking back, as this thing's coming towards us. I was ready to jump in the water. We were all gathered there.

The debris went well into the Hudson. It almost went to Jersey. There was debris almost to Jersey. It was over our heads. It was just blowing. There were papers -- the amount of paper, it was like a ticker tape parade. There were like a billion times more paper. We were swatting paper out of our face, on top of the soot and the ash and everything else.

So then we stayed there. More people were coming. I started cutting up sheets. I had sheets. There was a stretcher like to the side. I started cutting up sheets and started making masks for everybody, because everybody's coughing, breathing in mouthfuls of shit. We were all covered from head to toe. I just started cutting up sheets and whatever.

Then we stayed in that one area. I think there was a fire chief in the area. He said to stand fast until further notice. We stood there. A boat was in the Hudson, and they called that boat in. It had beverages and reinforcements on the boat, water and everything. They pulled that boat in and docked it, and we unloaded it.

As people were coming down Vesey, coming down to the scene, we were just handing out water, tagging them, treating them. Everybody wants to go back, but we're told we can't go back. Now we smell fumes. You smell gas in the air. You can damn near see fire. You could see fires blazing.

That's when they say -- I don't know how much time passed since then. Now they're like, "Gather anything you can, anything you can retrieve, and head north to Chelsea Piers. That's where the staging is going to be."

So I grabbed the stretcher, and I ran back about halfway between West and North End on Vesey, and I was trying to gather my equipment. All of my equipment was right there on that

corner. I didn't have anything. All I had on me was my helmet I was wearing and my turnout coat. My tech bag, all of my equipment was at that corner. I think the unit was at that corner, or my partner had got out -- the guy I was with, Garfield Grey, he was out of there.

I was going to go back for the ambulance, but I was told not to, because there were ambulances on fire. There were fire trucks crushed. So I went about halfway. There was nothing there to gather. Then I came back up to North End.

Inside the lobby of this building here -- I guess that's just an apartment building -- they had a lot of equipment in there. So we just gathered all of that equipment and loaded up the stretcher about a good six feet high and just walked that thing all the way up to Chelsea Piers. I walked behind along River Terrace back onto West Street and then up to Chelsea.

We stayed up there a good -- I'd say a good five hours. By that time me and Mike had hooked back up. Now we were in unit 240. The

unit was totally stripped. We unloaded the unit. Now it was totally stripped. We were sitting up there waiting for the word, just waiting for the word when we could go back down.

Now it's afternoon. Now it's like there's thousands of units. You see units rolling in from Baltimore, Philly, Jersey. Everybody was out there, just lining up along West Street on both sides of the street. I'm talking from about Chambers -- yeah, I would say from Chambers all the way up to like 28th Street you could see units lined up with no space in between, bumper to bumper, all the way up West Street. That's as far as I could see. I was about at -- that's like 23rd. I was at about 20th, 20th and West Street.

We noticed around like, I guess, 4:00, 4 or 5:00 that we were running low on fuel, so we asked for permission to refuel at Battalion 8, at Bellevue Hospital. So we were given permission. We went that way --

Oh, wait, another major thing. When that second building came down, as we were running, you hear this thunder in the air. This

was a scary part. We hear thunder. That's when I'm like, oh, no, now they're going to bomb us. You hear this thunder. You know it's in the air, but you don't see anything. You just hear this loud sound. It's just getting bigger and bigger.

Then you see our fighters in the air, F-14s, whatever they were, F-18s. Everybody just got a new sense of hope. We were all just cheering, like "USA" and "shoot those mother fuckers down." We knew we were at war. We knew we were at war.

When the Feds arrived, like the Secret Service agent was near me, a couple Secret Service agents, and they were just telling us about the Pentagon. That's when we found out about the Pentagon and some of the other things transpired down there. Now that I think about it, there's a lot I forget.

Basically we waited up there for the word to go back down. Once we got to Bellevue, the National Guard was already mobilized. They had check points along 23rd Street. Once we got to Bellevue, instead of heading back to -- since we knew the bus was stripped, we called Battalion

4, which is our station. We called from Battalion 8 to ask if they wanted us to reload the bus, restock the equipment. So we were told to restock the equipment at Battalion 4.

So we drove down to our battalion, and we restocked the bus. Then we proceeded to the ferry, which was another staging area. They said any injuries that were north of the site would go to Chelsea; anything south would go to the ferry. Since we're more south from the site, we headed to the ferry after we stocked the bus, which was around I guess 6, 7:00. It was starting to get dark.

They were like, all pass days are canceled. You're going to work 12-hour shifts or 16-hour shifts or something like that. All pass days are canceled until further notice.

So we went down to the ferry, and we just sat there and waited for a while for patients. Everybody was really anxious to go back. Nobody wanted to sit there. Nobody wanted to sit there like that. We were all getting frustrated, truthfully.

A few firefighters came in. A few

firefighters with minor injuries came in. Between the ferry and Chelsea Piers, they had these units set up where they were ready to perform major surgery. They had surgery that was really impressive, the organization of the whole thing.

It was really organized and really -- I mean, in the middle of a disaster, we were really prepared and we wanted to treat a lot of people, but unfortunately we kind of knew there wasn't going to be a lot of patients. We knew, but we were in denial.

Then we sat at the ferry. Me and Mike, we stayed together. We stayed until about 4:00 that morning, and then we were finally relieved. We were both pretty exhausted, so we drove home. I dropped him off at home. Did he stay? No, I dropped him off. We drove back to Staten Island together. I dropped him off at home.

I finally went home, and the first thing I did was turn the television on. I was exhausted. I turned the TV, and I saw things happen -- I saw the replay of the planes hitting, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It did



not register. It didn't look real. It looked like toy planes. I'm like, that's what happened out there? That's what happened out there?

I think I watched TV for about six hours straight. I didn't go to sleep until well into -- they told me to come back when I could on Thursday -- I mean on Wednesday, Wednesday day. I didn't get home until Wednesday morning. I watched TV until a good 12 or 1 in the afternoon. I slept about two hours, and then I came back to work. I stayed another 16.

When I got home I think it was around Thursday night, and I woke up Friday morning and I fell apart. That's when I fell apart. It really hit me. I was in shambles. I was in bad shape. My wife was trying to console me.

Once the buildings fell, cell phones were out. Everything was out. I didn't even get in contact with my family until I got to Battalion 8, which was that afternoon. Everybody was hysterical. My family was calling from all over the country. It was really -- it was insane. It was insane.

I feel like a part of me is still out

there. A part of me is out there with the people (inaudible). The whole situation has really changed my life. It's humbled me. It's made me real humble that every day is not guaranteed, which I already knew but that even brought it more, just in the business that we do.

But a situation like that, that was -- in my imagination I can't think of devastation to that magnitude. Just -- every day I come back to work it's like a nightmare that I can't wake up from. Every day I come back to work it's like, no, they did not take those buildings down, because I'm right downtown. The unit I work sits right downtown.

Just as a kid I've always been amazed by those buildings. I was always amazed by those buildings. It's a part of our identity as New Yorkers. To see the skyline without those buildings, especially the first few weeks coming back to work with the smoke -- that smoke didn't stop for a good month and a half after -- it was totally unreal, totally unreal.

My words don't even begin to touch the surface of what happened that day. I'm just

trying to put into some kind of perspective. My words don't even begin to touch the surface. That's about it.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

A. I would just like to give my -- I don't know if it's proper, but I just want to -- all the guys that responded, fire, police, EMS, private, just everybody all across the country, it was a really heroic effort.

Speaking for the guys at Battalion 4, we all -- I'm very appreciative that we're all accounted for. Some guys were missing for a little while, but for the most part we're all accounted for. That's more than we can say for a lot of guys. I just feel sorry for everybody that was out there. I dedicate my career, the rest of my career in the Fire Department to the people that died that day.

That's about it.

Q. Thank you very much for doing this interview with me.

MR. ECCLESTON: The time is 1:31, and the counter reads 390.

File No. 9110336

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

BARRETT HIRSCH

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. CUNDARI: Today is December 17, 2001.

The time is 719 hours. I'm George Cundari, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assign command.

A. Barrett Hirsch, paramedic, New York City Fire Department, Battalion 58, Division 3.

Q. Okay, Barrett, can you please tell us the events regarding is tragic day of September 11?

A. Well, starting about roughly 10:15, 10:20, we received an assignment to respond to the Borough of Manhattan. Initially, our first response was not to where the World Trade Center was, but to an unconscious patient somewhere in the general vicinity.

We responded from Brooklyn, and basically once winding up in the borough, we came across one of the local bridges. From the explosion back in '93, I knew that the towers would pretty much be an odd ball shot of getting there. Came across the Manhattan Bridge, and that's -- you can basically see pretty much both towers engulfed in flames.

We shot down toward our assignment, which was just west of Broadway, and did a canvas of the area.

Once we made contact with the Brooklyn dispatcher, we went to the tower, at which point the first tower collapsed, so when we finally got it to a staging area, one of the two that initially had been set up, they were worried about the integrity of the second tower, so we went into another area.

Q. Did you witness the tower collapsing?

A. The second tower. We were about --

Q. The first tower. Did you see it as you were approaching?

A. To be honest, Bill may have seen it. I was busy driving the vehicle and trying not to hit the pedestrians that were around, because obviously there were a lot, a lot of traffic.

So once we got to one of the first primary staging areas, at that time. We were directed just to get the vehicles out. They were trying to establish a secondary.

Q. Were you seeing any patients at that time after the collapse?

A. Not initially, not initially. I think most people were just trying to basically evacuate the area. It was basically a lot of the same stuff you saw back from -- at least that I saw back in '93, a lot of

little people with soft tissue stuff, but most people just trying to get out.

Once we set up the second area, we started to get ourselves back down towards the second tower so we can assist in patient care.

Q. Who was at that staging area?

A. To be honest, I really -- I remember seeing some of our vehicles and one or two voluntaries, but not one particular officer was in charge, so I really couldn't give you the name as far as who was basically calling the shot.

As we started to make our way up is when I happened to look up, and I saw a lot of people, you know, jumping out of the building. Then I noticed, like, the top of the tower seemed to shoot up a little bit and start to fall down a little bit, and that's when Bill Simon and I, who was my partner, just bolted in towards one of the other overpasses just to get some cover, and--

Q. So you ran north?

A. We ran north up the Westside Highway, and just went into -- several police officers were shooting out doors so we could get in, just trying to secure a safe area for us as the second collapsed, at

which point -- once some of the debris and the last big pillar of smoke, we were able to get out, just start working our way back up to towards what was left now of the second tower, and we just, like, left the vehicle where it was, and I don't even remember at that point. I think it was where the second one (inaudible). Somewhere near Murray, I believe, and we just started working our way back down towards the trade center.

At that point, there was pretty much a lot of mass confusion at that point. It was just like everybody knew whatever resources had been in the immediate area were probably just wiped. I ran into one of my old S.O.D. lieutenants, Lieutenant Santiago. He and I immediately kind of like snapped into some of our old S.O.D. training. We started just, like, gathering units together, see if we can create like a secondary staging area.

We saw a lot of little soft tissue stuff, a couple of respiratory distresses. We were finding some half crews. We did our best to, like, put them together and see if we could coordinate getting the most critical moved up to Chelsea where we heard -- whatever they -- I guess they made that their primary staging and just whatever we could find, just trying to



get crews together and start taking care of the patients.

And that's basically how that -- that part of the event went -- seemed like several hours, but I know it was only several minutes. Bill and I at that point had separated, Bill Simon and I had separated. Bill hooked up with -- I don't know his name. He was one of the lieutenants from Manhattan. He was from Bellevue. He went up to Chelsea Pier with the vehicle, and Jerry Lieutenant Santiago, tried to keep it in the Haz-Mat realm.

Q. Basically, so really not many patients after the collapse?

A. No, not really. Not like back in '93. I mean '83. '93.

Then once all the bosses started to get over their primary shock, they started to get the sector commands back, established again, including the Fire Department, we had a small -- they were actually gathering some of the old Haz-Mat teams together and some of the old USAR teams. Was all part of S.O.D. at that time. The whole area was -- they were deciding whether or not we were going to suit up, or how and when USAR was going to get activated.

Q. Where were you exactly when the tower collapsed?

A. Second tower?

Q. North tower collapsed.

A. North tower collapsed. North tower, I was probably somewhere between -- probably between either Murray and Barclay, or Barclay and Vesey.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West, yeah.

Q. You guys just ran up? You didn't go into a building anywhere there?

A. Trying to go up?

Q. You ran north when you --

A. Oh, you mean after the tower collapsed?

Q. When it started collapsing.

A. Yeah, we just ran north probably more towards Barclay.

Q. Did you go into a building there?

A. Yes. Probably down a little bit further when we stopped running was on the other side of Warren Street where the school is. We ducked into the -- there's an overpass from one school over to the other, and we ducked into the school.

Basically after that it was just -- at that

point they started bringing us into one of the other secondary schools, and they started putting medics with EMTs and going down to the pile to see if they could find anything. I did that for the next day or so.

Q. A long time.

A. Yeah, it was a long day.

Q. How was your radio communications?

A. Well, to be honest, other than point-to-point, as far as, like, trying to hear some of, like, either Brooklyn central or Manhattan, it was very scratchy, pretty much unreadable.

What little I did hear was mostly on the -- Bill and I, we were staying point-to-point, we were on the local TAC frequency, so that that kept us -- at least he knew what I was doing, and I knew what he was doing to make sure we were safe. So that went -- like because I knew, like, the lower Manhattan frequency was just trash. They didn't need to know where we were going through or any other nonsense.

You could hear -- every once in awhile I switched over to citywide to see if anything was going. When I had run into Dr. Gonzalez, he basically wanted to know -- once again, it goes back to the old SOD days. He was, like, oh, what do we have here,

here, here and here. I'm like, this isn't the old SOD days. I don't have any details for you like I used to be able to get.

Q. Right.

A. And it was very -- that was very -- that was very annoying to me personally.

Q. Because you didn't have the equipment?

A. I didn't have the equipment. I didn't have the resources, and I didn't have the additional -- just basically additional information to be able to play with, some of the tools that I had earlier. That kind of made me feel pretty much worthless. I just didn't like that at all.

Q. So when you arrived, they were talking about a secondary collapse?

A. They were already concerned about the --

Q. So they were moving things around?

A. Like that, they were trying to get things reorganized after the first blast they -- I know they started some of the crews and somebody over in the other tower and --

Q. Who was talking about that?

A. It was just (inaudible) around the area. I couldn't be specific as to what particular boss

mentioned it or --

Q. Fire chiefs were there?

A. Everybody was there. Everybody was squared off at that point, because they already knew they lost one building. It's only a matter of time -- the second is less than 200 feet away, so yeah, everybody was pretty much concerned.

Fire was pulling back. We were pulling back. P.D. was screaming get their guys out. Everybody was -- everybody was just trying to get the fuck out at that point. Trying to -- you saw a lot of people taking people with them. Nobody was like -- I mean, they tried to make this about as organized as that could be, but --

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for conducting this interview. The time is 7:31. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110350

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EVELYN VEGA

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MS. BASTEDENBECK: The time now is 1710 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I work for the New York City Fire Department. I'm at Battalion 4 EMS command doing an interview regarding the date September 11, 2001, with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, your rank, your shield number and the area you work.

A. Hi. My name is EMT EVELYN VEGA. My shield number is 5752. I'm currently assigned to Battalion 04, Station 11.

Q. Ms. Vega, you were working on the morning of September 11, 2001?

A. Yes, I was. I was.

Q. Can you just tell me about the events that morning?

A. Yes. Okay. My tour began at 0900 to 1700 hours, and I was on duty. I came in, my normal routine, to work, and I went to the locker room, and came out, got ready, whatever, and my partner that morning was EMT Torres. When I came down, he was -- actually, he already had vehicle keys. That was vehicle 404. He was inspecting the vehicle.

It was about a quarter to 9 a.m. I bumped

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into one of my coworkers. His name is EMT Bell. He starts also at 0900, and by the way, that morning, I was 01 boy. So I bumped into Bell, and he told me, "Oh, did you hear that a plane hit the World Trade Center?" I said, "No, no, I don't believe you. What are you talking about?" He said, "Come, come, I'll show you. You can see it from here."

So I followed him. We weren't able to see anything. So I just wasn't sure. I just went in for roll call, and I went inside, kind of ran inside to the office, and Lieutenant Melaragno was there, and he was -- he just threw the keys, the radios. He was just get out of here, get out of here, so now it was kind of confirmed, although I wasn't, you know, a hundred percent sure, but he was, like, get out of here. A plane hit the World Trade Center.

So I just took some keys, and I gave them back because my partner already had the stuff he needed so I just hopped -- jumped into the driver's side, and we just head out. We weren't dispatched by a dispatcher. We just were sent out by the lieutenant, and we just drove towards the World Trade Center.

As I'm getting closer, I see a big hole at -- I guess it was Tower 1, World Trade Center 1, the north



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tower.

Q. The first building that was struck?

A. Uh-huh, the first building.

Then by this time, I think it was like five minutes to 9 a.m., and we're driving, and then we are -- I remember being on Barclay. We're driving. I told my partner, "Should I make a left here onto Broadway?" He says, "No, continue west." I said, "Fine." Do I turn on Church? He's like no. We looked. He said, "No, too much commotion."

We went straight, still continued west. We got to West Street. I said, "Do I make a left here?" He said, "Yeah, make a left here," and so I made a left, and I pulled over at Vesey and West Street facing south on the east side of the street on West Street.

We jump out of the vehicle. We put on our safety jacket, our helmet, and we take out all equipment, stretcher, whatever, everything, and we start heading towards the building.

Now, we bumped into a chief, fire chief. I don't know his name. I don't recall anything. I just -- he was flagging us to come towards him, and so we went towards him, and then when I assumed -- at the time I didn't know -- but now I know that the second

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plane had hit, and we looked up. We heard it. The debris started falling. People started jumping off the building, whatever.

So he was, like, clear the way, move your vehicle a little north. So we moved like a few feet north, and I believe it was still on Vesey and West, but on the north side of -- north corner, versus the south corner where we were, and I moved, and I went back towards the buildings.

I had a few people that worked in the building calling us that there was people in the basement, and they needed help. So we're debating should we go in or not. We decided to go in.

We went into one World Trade Center. We went inside. We went -- the elevator wasn't working. It was on two sublevels down. We went down. We left the stretcher in the lobby, and we went down. There was two patients. It was like 15 other workers. They were doing construction work down there.

The patients were one female, one male, and one had a back injury, and one had a knee or a leg injury, fracture or whatever. We only had one back board. We improvised. We cared for these patients, and then we rushed them out.

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We used the exit through the underground garage that workers there assisted us with, so we got out of there. Before we left, one patient was taken by the workers to help us. They took the female patient, and my partner went to make alignment for -- to let them know that where we were, because, of course, we were dispatched not by them, but by our lieutenant, so nobody really knew where we were. So he did that.

Supposedly he got in contact with central, whatever the case may be. He came back, and we took the second patient out, and we got out. When we got out, there were ambulances in the area, so they took the patients, and we just went to our -- we left with -- you know, we gave the patient to the other unit and we became -- we started walking now.

When we exited, we were on Vesey and West in the middle of the block between Church, between West Broadway and West Street on Vesey, so we just started walking together towards the ambulance. When we got into the ambulance, we put our equipment and whatever, and we found out at that time that they were staging at Vesey between West Street and North End, so I angle parked the ambulance.

My partner went to speak to the chief in

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command or whoever the operating lieutenant that was, you know, responsible for the triage of the commanding area. So I stood there, and I was trying to use my cell phone, and I didn't get a reception.

At this time, I didn't know we were hit by a second plane. I just heard on 1010 WINS that the Pentagon was hit, and I was, like, okay, you know, whatever, and I just stepped out of the vehicle, and I stood behind my ambulance, and I saw a cop there trying to use the phone. So I started talking to him, and he said, "Well, I can't get through." I said, "Me neither," whatever.

So moments after, maybe five minutes or so, I hear a rumble, and I just look towards the east side of the street. I'm in the middle of the block on Vesey between West and North End, so now I turn, and I look east towards the corner of West and Vesey, and I see people in blue uniforms, cops, whoever they were. They were running towards my way, so I didn't know what to do, so I looked the opposite direction, and I see other people running the same direction.

So I just started running. So I started running by myself because my partner was taking care of something else, so I just ran, left the vehicle there,

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and just kept running north. Running, running north, and still at this time I didn't know that the second plane was hit, and when we heard that rumble, that noise, I didn't know that that was when the first tower fell until I met up with another coworker. His name is EMT Orlando Martinez. We stood together for the whole way.

There was no one else from Battalion 4. We just kept running north. We kept stopping. I was trying to raise my partner over the radio, and all I kept hearing was Mayday, Mayday. We had no idea where his partner or my partner were, so we were worried, and no one else from our battalion was there. So it was out of control.

As we were running north, and we were looking south, we saw the smoke and everything, and then we heard, you know, that the building had fell, whatever, so we finally got, I guess, to -- it was West Street and closer to Chambers, and we just stood there, and trying to find out, you know, permission, trying to use someone's phone. The restaurants were open. People giving water at a local bar. So we got water, and I was trying to use the phone, but there were lines, so I didn't use the phone. And then we find -- we hear the

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second building fell.

So now we keep running north, because they kept saying just run north. So everybody was just running, civilians, police officers, some ambulance. We hopped in some ambulance. We just went north, dropped everything. Everybody was just -- it was a commotion going north.

Now you have to go to Chelsea Piers. You have to go to Chelsea Piers. So we didn't go to Chelsea Piers yet. We were still going north, and we stopped, and then they said there was a gas leak. Something in the air. We got to get out of the area. Some pollution or whatever. So now the guy that I was with, Orlando Martinez, he bumped into his partner, so beautiful, I found out that my partner was looking for me, but no sight of him.

So now there was like a few -- like five guys from Battalion 4, so we were feeling better about, you know, everybody being okay. So we started running, and then when they announced there was, like, a gas leak, I mean, this is all I heard, you know, people -- just rumors running around with information, and, of course, everywhere we stopped there was like a lieutenant, EMT lieutenant, or a Fire Department lieutenant, or

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whoever. There was always a boss, someone telling us what to do, where to go.

So finally, we jumped into -- the last thing was like that gas leak thing, and I opened the back doors of the ambulance, and like 15 million people. They were all EMTs, cops, transit, whatever. They ran inside of the back of the ambulance, and we just kept going to Chelsea Piers. They told us where to park, and we just staged there.

We stood there, and I was able -- that's when Chelsea Piers was open. They were helping us, giving us water. They let us use the phone, and I contacted my family. I guess this was all by eleven o'clock, because the second building, I think, fell like 10:30, so this whole thing by 11, I figure.

I contacted my family, and then finally before twelve I reunited with my partner, and then there was another EMT. Her name is EMT Perrin. I don't know her last name, but she belongs to Battalion 4, and she had just finished coming off duty, Tour 1, so she came in, and she was doing inventory of all the Battalion personnel, you know, who was missing or whatever. So it was a good thing that, you know, she had a list that we could ask, did you speak to this

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one, did you bump into this one, did you have the possibility of this one, whatever.

So at this point, like, it was a whole bunch of us from Battalion 4. It was maybe a few people missing we were worried about, but for the most part, everybody was okay.

Then, like, three p.m. we were relieved from the scene, and we went back to the 911 system.

Q. At what point did you pick up your vehicle and bring it uptown with you?

A. I never did. My partner apparently -- I bumped into him by twelve, I'm assuming, and he had the vehicle, so he picked it up, because after the whole story, I mean, after this whole thing, I found out that instead of him -- most of them running north, they ran west towards the water, so everybody was hanging out there by the water. That's why we didn't hear any more from our battalion because that's where everybody was, but me and Martinez, we were going north because, I mean, that's the only way.

I didn't even think about going through the park out to the water. I just went north, so he picked up the vehicle with whoever else. We had all the ambulances there. That's where they were staging.



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So that's basically the adventure.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add to what you told me so far?

A. No.

Q. That pretty much covers the day?

A. Yes. Of course, that I had to work two shifts, which is expected, 16 hours, and after we were relieved, and we went to the 911 system, it was like torture. We were getting calls with people having headaches and just stomach pains, and it was just too much for me to handle. I mean, just knowing what we just went through, and how we are needed for other things, and we have people actually dialing 911 for a headache. I was really bothered by that.

A lot of our calls were on North End Street and South End Street, which is right across from the World Trade Center, and both buildings, of course, had no light and no electricity, no elevators. Nothing was happening.

So we were receiving calls, and we were being dispatched to those buildings where we had to climb 30, 40 floors to get there with flashlights and all the equipment, so that was mind-boggling, because every time we got to these high-rises, there was no patient,

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no one was there.

I mean, everybody was evacuated, but I guess it's part of our job, but it was just -- yeah, it was not a good thing, you know, and then to get there, we had to park our ambulance, like, far away from, and then we'd have to carry everything and go through all the rubble.

I bumped into firefighters that were taking out firefighters that were dead, you know, so it was just crazy. It was crazy, but that was it basically.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Thank you very much for your time. The time now is 1725 hours. Thank you very much.

MS. VEGA: Thank you.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This concludes our interview.

File No. 9110351

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

Captain David Fenton

Interview Date: December 18, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Fenton

MURRAY MURAD: The time is now 1300

hours and I'm Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with --

A. Captain David Fenton, New York City Fire Department, EMS Command, assigned to Division 6.

Q. This interview is being conducted at the Fire Department headquarters at the Bureau of Investigations and Trials, and this is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Captain Fenton, can you tell us in your own words what happened that day?

A. Okay. I normally worked tour 3 as a duty captain in the South Bronx. I was home in bed. Nice place to be. My wife called me and said, "You better turn on the TV. Something is up. I think you have to go to work." So I turned on the TV and that was right after the first tower got hit. I called in. They said, "Yep, come on in." And they were going to leave a Suburban for me. I drove to Jacobi, got in the Suburban. As I was driving over the Throgsneck Bridge as I was -- in reference with time, on the way in, at about 9:55, when the south tower collapsed.

Fenton

I got to Jacobi just as the north tower collapsed at about 10:29. It was myself, four EMT's who I don't have a clue who they were that Jacobi put in my Suburban. I know they track their names and stuff at Jacobi. And a paramedic by the name of Ed Bradley, we all jumped in the Suburban and down to the Trade Center we went. We were heading down -- we were told by Citywide to respond to Chambers and West and we were southbound on Chambers at about the meat packing district, at about Little West 12th Street, when they were in the process of doing the rapid evacuation for the gas main.

I saw everybody coming back at us. We turned around. Most of the units were stopping there. I knew that there was a prestaging area set up at the Chelsea Piers. So as the units were stopping there, I instructed all those units to continue on up to the Chelsea Piers to the prestaging area where they can be turned around and redeployed as needed.

After making sure that all the units went up to Chelsea, where I took my suburban and my five people, we turned around and went back up to Chelsea. I was there and I saw Chief Kowalczyk and a few other people organizing the staging area.

Fenton

They told me to just turn around and go right back down again. So I responded down West Street parking probably just north of Warren Street and we were parked southbound in the northbound lanes. We got out and we walked out to the command post that was established at Chambers and West. At that point the five personnel who were with me were directed into Stuyvesant High School to a personnel staging area and I was directed to remain at the command post and await orders.

A short time after that I was instructed by Chief Carrasquillo to report in to the Stuyvesant High School and ensure that the personnel who are in there were getting formed into teams for deployment, if needed. There were approximately five lieutenants there and about 30 EMT's and medics combined. I know Lieutenant Horan was there and he was the one I tasked with taking attendance and forming everybody up into teams. So there would be at least five EMT's, one medic and one lieutenant per team. Also about that time there was a decision made that the lobby of the building would be used to treat any walk-in wounded. They set it up as a treatment area, which a wide variety of doctors,

Fenton

nurses and everybody else arrived with medical supplies. I don't know where they came from or who they were. They set up a medical clinic there. We assigned some of our people to assist in that area.

Most of the stuff they were doing were eye washes. One thing that struck me as amazing was I didn't see any stretcher cases. Nobody came in on a backboard or a stretcher. Everybody was ambulatory. Then later on, about twelve-ish or so, 12:30, I went with Chief Carrasquillo and we did have a reconnoiter of the area. And what we were looking for was a place to place for the tents to be set up coming from the Parks Department to become the true treatment area on the Riverside with Medivac access. We found an area. We worked it out with a Police Officer, I believe, or maybe even a sergeant from ESU by the name of Techie who would -- where the cops would be landing their helicopters, where we would be landing the Medivac helicopters. And that never actually came to fruition. We didn't use it.

Going back inside, by that time Lieutenant Fuchs from the academy -- Kath Fuchs was there from the academy and she started taking care of organizing the inside of the house as the treatment

Fenton

area. At which point I was redeployed by Chief Carrasquillo back out to the command post and I assisted in doing a variety of small tasks and directing a few people there.

Q. Where was the command post again?

A. The command post was at the intersection of Chambers and West, underneath an overpass. Deputy Assistant Chief Butler was there, Chief Carrasquillo was there and Chief Martin was there, that I saw. Other people coming in and out, but they were the ones that were assigned there. Originally I was assigned as the Fire Department liaison to the forward Fire Chiefs and I went down toward Ground Zero at that point, shadowing a chief. Did what we had to do. They then established -- a forward command post was set up at Vesey and West, which is where I spent a good part of the time after that for the rest of the day just funneling the information to the Chiefs, fire side and requests back out to our command post at Chambers and West.

Eventually I was relieved and I was sent back to the command post where I was given a set of keys and some paper and a pen and my new job was to go down to Ground Zero and record all the ambulances



Fenton

that were destroyed and get the doors popped and make sure that none of our people were still in them. I went down to one of the fire vehicles, got a Halligan and I proceeded down into the south side. First I started the north side. There weren't too many vehicles there. I recorded what was there. Most of them were open. Then I went around to the south side of Liberty where a large quantity of ambulances were there. None really of ours. Mostly the 911 participants. And I proceeded with a couple of firefighters. We popped a few rear doors, popped a few cabs that we couldn't see into. I made an account of all the vehicles that were there. We didn't find anybody either under them or in them. I went around and did the same thing on the Church Street side to the vehicles I could get to. There were some vehicles that were underneath number 7 when it came down that we just couldn't get to, because the rubble pile was shifting and most of it was still on fire.

The list of equipment in the vehicles were then given back to the command post at Chambers and West and they called in representatives from the other 911 participants, to give them their vehicles at

Fenton  
that were in there. So that way they could start  
doing a vehicle accounting.

Q. How many vehicles did you estimate or did  
you observe or count?

A. Approximately 15 to 20.

Q. And those were all EMS? Fire Department?

A. No. Those were ambulances. Actually, the  
majority of them were 911 participants and not  
municipal ambulances.

Q. So you are referring to like Metrocare?

A. Metrocare, New York Hospital, Beekman  
Downtown.

Q. So roughly between fifteen and twenty  
ambulances?

A. Fifteen and twenty ambulances that I  
physically entered.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like  
to add?

A. No. And then the rest of the night I  
functioned pretty much as a site safety officer with  
several other former SOD members. Charlie Fraser,  
Jimmy Scullion, Steve Linke, Kevin Haugh, Jeff Race.

MURRAY MURAD: All right. I would like  
to thank you, Captain Fenton, for the

Fenton  
interview. The time now is 1312 hours. This  
now concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110367

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

JASON KATZ

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is December 20, 2001. My name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, shield number and assigned command.

A. My name is Jason Katz. My shield is 2101, and I am currently an EMT chief's aide at Division 4.

Q. Jason, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes.

Q. In your own words, can you tell me about the details of that day?

A. The day started out -- I reported to work at the division office, as I normally do, and I was here for maybe ten minutes when I was told that the two planes crashed into the twin towers, and that Chief Carrasquillo was on his way here, and he was picking up personnel to go.

From that time, Chief Carrasquillo arrived. We jumped into the car with him. We grabbed our helmets and turnout coats, and we responded in, and I guess about -- being on the LIE probably by the Pulaksi

JASON KATZ

Skyway, we got the report that the second plane crashed into the second tower, the north tower.

Q. When you say "we," can you just tell me who the other people with you were?

A. I was in the car with Chief Carrasquillo, Captain Rivera and Chief Carrasquillo's aide, Sal Sangeniti.

At that time, we came out of the tunnel into Manhattan and shot down the FDR around to the Westside Highway and parked our car roughly around Westside Highway and Carlyle Street.

Q. Can you just indicate on the map provided approximately where you parked your vehicle?

A. I would say between Carlyle and Rector. That's about the best I remember. Between Carlyle and Rector.

Q. Can you just mark it with the No. 1? Thank you.

A. At that time, we got out of the car, and Chief Carrasquillo told me to meet up with Chief Brown, who had just arrived a little bit before us, and he was a few cars ahead of us, and to go team up with him and become his aide for the day.

When I went to go meet Chief Brown, there

JASON KATZ

were a few bodies laying in the street -- and I just met up with Chief Brown. We reported in to operations. Operations told us to set up staging and triage, more staging at West and Liberty, and on the way back to West and Liberty, there was debris flying down, and it was pretty scary. There was a bunch of pieces of metal or debris just coming down, and I think there were bodies. I wasn't even sure. We just kept moving, kept running over to set up the staging area on West and Liberty.

Chief Brown directed me at that time to just track what units were where, and, you know, who was who, and a lot of voluntary and private ambulances on the scene. Just try to get the number and names of the crews, and at that time I was doing that, and then we started to hear a roar, and I looked back.

Everybody was running, so I just kind of started running with them, and the next thing I know, I just remember jumping on a staircase and putting my hands over my helmet, and, you know praying to God, and then it all went black. It was silent. You couldn't hear a thing.

I remember something hit my hand. I don't know what it was. I got up after all this. It seemed

JASON KATZ

like it was forever, but it was probably just a few minutes. It was -- I remember seeing a fire truck. I think it was on fire. I remember just trying to work my way over there.

I heard people screaming and yelling and just, you know, all disarray. So I made it over to the fire truck looking for a Scott pack, and kind of hung out in this fire truck. I don't even know what company it was. I think it was a tower ladder, and things lifted a little bit.

Q. Do you know what that location was?

A. It was just south of the south crossover. It was just south of there, and things started to lift, and then I heard Bobby Brown's voice just calling for me, and things began lifting a little more, and I made my way back over to him, and we just kind of started to looking under debris.

Everything was lifting. It was kind of hard to breathe. We were covered head to toe, you know, with dust and everything, and we were just looking in the debris, listening for people screaming, seeing if we could find anybody. At that time, we ran into Chief Wells. We found a suburban, and we were looking through the suburban for a first-aid kit just to wrap



JASON KATZ

up my hand. Because at this time I noticed my hand was bleeding pretty good. I had cut two fingers on my left hand.

After that, we were there for maybe 15, 20 minutes just looking, you know, trying to regroup, see who was where, try and get in contact with the command post, if they were still alive. We didn't even know.

At that point, we really weren't sure of what had happened. We just -- you know, and then we looked up, and we noticed the tower was gone. It seemed like it was just maybe 15, 20 minutes, and I just heard everyone saying, run again.

So I went in through -- went in through one building that the south tower was attached to on the west side. I'm not sure what building it was. The lobby was all blown out. All the glass was blown out, so you could run right through the lobby, so once they started saying run, I just took off again, made it through the lobby, started running down -- I don't know what street it was.

Q. West End Avenue?

A. Yes, that's where it was, West End Avenue, and I jumped into a store, and I guess it's the Gateway Plaza here. I think it was a diner, or a coffee shop

JASON KATZ

or something like that. At that point, the second tower had come down, and when I was in that store, there was one civilian in there, who was hiding underneath the table, and she was pretty panicked. I calmed her down a little bit, and after things started to lift again, I escorted her over to a building on West End and Albany on the -- that would be the southeast corner.

There were a whole bunch of firemen in there and civilians. I don't even know what they were, cops or firemen. Cops were wearing firemen helmets. Firemen were wearing just hard hats. You had no clue who was who, but we stayed in there for a little bit.

They kind of pulled us over when things started to lift. We stayed in there for a few minutes, and then I came out of there, and once again just amazingly I ran into Chief Brown. I heard him screaming, you know, calling out. We met up with him, and we met up with Commissioner Gregory. I think he's communications.

Q. Yes.

A. He was there in a turnout coat, and a few firefighters, and a couple of, I think, Metro Care ambulance people had all gathered in the middle of the

JASON KATZ

street. Then we heard two planes coming overhead. We weren't sure, you know, if they were friendly or just loud jet engines, so we started making a little run to the west side. We noticed it was a F-16.

We were ready to jump in the drink if we had to, and at that time a fire boat had met us over on the west side and we -- that ambulance bandaged my finger up on the west side there. Then we started helping civilians onto the fire boat. That was pretty much just civilians and people who were nurses were helping wash out our eyes and helping wash civilians' eyes and just helping everybody off the island at that point.

Then from there we started making our way down to the Battery City, and something about a report of a gas leak, that they were evacuating the island, and it was kind of a mad rush, and everyone was jumping on police boats that were in the basin, the boat basin down there.

We all jumped on the police boats -- myself, Bobby Brown and a couple of other EMTs -- and we jumped on the boat. They shot us over to Jersey. After we helped everybody off, we went back, and at that time we made our way down to Liberty -- Battery Park by the Liberty ferry terminal.

JASON KATZ

Q. Okay.

A. That's where we met up with Chief Steffens.

That was pretty much where things calmed down. We were there for about, I guess, an hour, just cleaning up, drinking some water.

At that point, I made my way down. Chief Brown stayed there, and I made my way down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal and the triage. They cleaned me up a little bit and sent me on the Staten Island ferry to a triage area at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal in Staten Island. I jumped on a bus, and they took me to Staten Island University Hospital.

Q. You said you had the injuries to your hand. What kind of injuries did you have?

A. There were degloving injuries, and I fractured the tips on my pointer and middle finger on my left hand.

Q. Do you know what you injured it on?

A. Just flying debris.

Q. Just flying debris.

A. What I forgot to mention was I remember when we were first there, Chief Brown told us to put on our chin straps, which is something most of the time we don't wear. That probably saved my life because I

JASON KATZ

would have lost my helmet when the debris was coming down.

Q. It's not something we commonly use, right.  
Is anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

A. No.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being  
concluded at 1447.

I thank you very much for conducting this  
interview. The tape is 181.

File No. 9110368

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

ROBERT KIMBALL

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is December 20, the year 2001. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck. I'm at Division 4, EMS command, conducting an interview regarding September 11 with the following individual.

MR. KIMBALL: My name is Robert Kimball. EMT, currently serve as a chief's aide.

Q. Bobby, were you working on the morning of September 11?

A. I was off. However, at 8:45, I heard the incident happened. I called the Division 4 office, asked them what the plan was and what we had planned to do. She advised me that she -- I'm sorry, Lieutenant Guarneri advised me she really didn't have a plan yet. So I asked if the spare vehicle 913, the van, was available, and if it was, that we should load it up with spare equipment, and I would be in within 15 minutes to pick it up and transport it down to LSU and MERV 4.

I made it here approximately nine o'clock, and at that time the van was loaded, and there was a lieutenant. I don't remember his name. I really didn't know him, and an EMT from downstairs, pretty much a new guy.

ROBERT KIMBALL

Q. When you say downstairs --

A. Downstairs at Battalion 50. We went into the vehicle. It was loaded up, and we made our way down into Manhattan.

At approximately -- we left here at 9:15. I made it down into Manhattan approximately ten o'clock. We were initially going to the west side, because we were told that's where MERV 4 and LSU 4 were staged, but we were unable to get over onto that side of the World Trade Center.

They redirected us at about 10:10 and told us to go down to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, because they wanted to set up a triage, treatment, transport area down there. So we went down to that area, went up to the 2nd Floor of the ramp for the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, and we set up a treatment transport area over there.

At that moment in time, I had no chief to work with, so Chief Villani said, "Okay, Bob, you're with me today." We did some initial stuff at the Battery Park ferry terminal, and then we had a gator, and we were pretty much just traveling all over the World Trade Center site.

We went to One Liberty Plaza to check on the



ROBERT KIMBALL

units that we had over there, because we had staged over there approximately 20 ambulances at one point. There was a treatment center. We were asked to go over there initially because of the question of the building's sturdiness, and that all turned out to be fine at that particular moment.

We went back down to the EMS command post, I guess. I'm not exactly sure where exactly that was. Everything just looked very different from what it looked like at that point. Met with I believe it was Chief Carrasquillo that particular moment in time, see what he wanted to do, where he wanted us at, so we were just basically going back and forth from the ferry terminal to the World Trade Center site looking at units, you know, seeing who needed what, going back to the ferry terminal to see, you know, how we're doing there.

I guess approximately three o'clock-ish sometime, that was about the next time I remember, I saw deputy chief Bobby Brown come in with some eye irritation and his aide Jason Katz with -- his hand had some lacerations on it, I believe. That was pretty much about the last time that I remember any kind of, like, time sequence, because I basically just stayed

ROBERT KIMBALL

the whole day at the -- between the ferry terminal and One Liberty Plaza.

I believe we went down to Liberty and West at one particular moment in time, and I believe we did make it over to Vesey and West at another particular time. I believe the command post was somewhere along here. Was it Murray and West that particular night? But that was earlier. We had no real protection as far as masks went.

Q. Where were you when the buildings collapsed?

A. We were traveling down -- I believe the first building collapsed, and we were traveling down Broadway. I think it collapsed, what, 9:05 or something? No, I'm sorry 10:05. 9:55.

So we were traveling down Broadway, and that's when we were redirected at about 10:10 down to the ferry terminal.

Q. Where were you when the second building collapsed?

A. When the second building collapsed, I believe -- let's see. What time did that collapse? Because I think I was still -- 10:29. I was just -- I guess we were right about here. I don't know what street this is.

ROBERT KIMBALL

Q. So you were south of Rector?

A. Yes, I was about, I guess, one, two blocks south of Rector. We had a whole bunch of ambulances standing here, more like Hunter and Metro Care, I guess it was, and we were trying to get them down more towards our area so we could stage them up properly.

So when the second building came down, that's where we were, right about here, but I guess by then we set up a treatment and triage center, which pretty much had almost done, and then I was just pretty much aide to Chief Villani for the rest of the duration of the event. I left at 9:30 the next morning.

Q. So you were there overnight?

A. Yeah, I was there overnight. I worked 24 hours straight, and everything else is just like -- I don't know. I remember bits and pieces.

Like I remember walking by with the chief, and I remember seeing the airplane engine, you know, pieces of, you know, obviously trade center all over. When I was walking around, we didn't see any bodies or body parts. They had those pretty much either cleaned up, or they were buried with the debris, so we really didn't see too much of that, but there was no way to get even the gaters anywhere near, near Liberty and

ROBERT KIMBALL

Trinity. It was just too much debris and hose, and so you couldn't even take the gator around. You had to walk, I would say, for a two block -- one block area this way and like a one and a half, two block area this way. You couldn't get the vehicles in.

Then I do remember that later on during that night we did take his car, Chief Villani's, and we did take it and park it up -- I believe we made it all the way to about Rector maybe. I think it was Rector.

Q. And West Street?

A. Yeah. Rector -- yeah, Rector and West, and we parked the car there and did another walk up towards the site.

Q. At the end of the evening, how did vehicle 913 -- where did that end up?

A. Well, that vehicle stayed at the ferry terminal, Staten Island Ferry Terminal, because we didn't unload all the equipment.

Q. So it stayed there?

A. So it stayed there strictly as a supplement to whatever they might have needed down at the ferry terminal. I carried oxygen. I carried nebulizers, Albuterol, fluids for irrigation, a couple of extra long boards, boxes of ACRs in case we needed them,

ROBERT KIMBALL

triage tags. Pretty much everything that I can think of that we didn't need, that would be stressing out the battalion, I took into that vehicle.

Q. How many days was it before you got the vehicle back or do you even know?

A. Oh, God.

Q. You did eventually get it back at the division?

A. Yeah, oh yeah. I believe that's how I got home. I asked them if they needed it, because they were going to shut down that area, I believe. Either they were going to shut it down or they released me because they didn't need the equipment that was in there, because we didn't receive too many people.

We thought it was going to be a lot more casualties, and they figured, you know, we have enough here. I loaded up what I could load up, you know, that I didn't need too much. I pretty much left them, you know, my oxygen that I could leave them, and that was really it.

I believe I took the vehicle back home. Yeah, I believe I drove the vehicle home, you know, back to the battalion.

Q. Anything else you want to add or that you can

ROBERT KIMBALL

think of?

A. Well, then I had to have the next day off, you know, obviously, but then I went down there, and I served as Bobby Brown's aide for the next six weeks down at the World Trade Center.

I believe the first possibly four weeks was down at Chambers and West at the EMS command post, and then the last two weeks that I served down there was down at 10 and 10, Liberty and -- what is that? Greenwich? Yes.

So I served my six weeks down there, and I haven't been there since.

Q. Is that all you have to say?

A. As far as the events of that day, as far as it went with me, yeah.

MS. BASTEDENBECK: This ends our interview.

The time now is 1452.

File No. 9110394

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT SPIRO YIORAS

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

S. YIORAS

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 10:28 in the morning. I'm George Cundari of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. My name is Spiro Yioras, rank is Lieutenant, command is Battalion 49, Division 4.

Q. Lieutenant, can you please tell us the events regarding that tragic day of September 11th?

A. On that day I was taken out of my battalion and redeployed to Battalion 46 for the tour due to no coverage over there. Initially, I was out on patrol when I heard a call come over the radio that there was a fire at the World Trade Center. Trying to find out more information, I got a message from Captain DeShore from Battalion 46 to come back to the station because we might be responding down there. As I responded back to the station at Battalion 46, we were watching the TV news, watching what was going on, and we saw the second plane hit the tower. Immediately we locked up the offices and we went right down to the Trade Center.

When we first got down there, we stationed on the corner of West Street and Vesey.



S. YIORAS

Q. How did you get there? What route did you take?

A. We took the 59th Street bridge over, down Second Avenue, and when we got down to like the 20s, we crossed over to the west side and we went straight down to the Trade Center.

Upon arriving on the scene, we met up with I believe Captain Wells from ERS. He was there. He was in charge of the scene and he gave us all assignments. I was assigned to staging. While I was doing staging, someone else appeared on the scene. I think it was Conditions 8. He already had started staging before I got there. Since he had everything under control, I went back to find Captain Wells and Captain DeShore and see what else they wanted me to do, how I was to be utilized.

Upon going back to the corner of West and Vesey, I don't know how long I was on the scene, it must have been like about maybe 20 minutes, 30 minutes, before the first tower collapsed. I just heard a rumbling noise and looked up and I saw parts of the building coming down and I just started running uptown on West Street.

Q. Prior to that collapse, did you see people,

S. YIORAS

injuries coming towards you; were there a lot of people?

A. There were injuries there. There were people being loaded into the back of ambulances. I saw some of the people from Battalion 49 like Lillo, Abrille. They were working 49 Victor. I saw EMTs Paul Adams and Mous Diaz. They were working 45 Adam. But once that started happening, we all started running and I lost track of them.

I got caught up in the smoke and all the dust from the building coming down, and as soon as the dust and smoke cleared away, I went back to look for personnel because I remembered where they had their ambulances parked and basically it was in the area of the collapse. As I was searching for the crews, Lillo, Abrille, Diaz and Adams, I was also searching for Lieutenants Scaringello, Captain DeShore, for Captain Wells also and anybody else that I could find.

Walking down on West Street, I passed this overpass, this white overpass that connected from the Trade Center to across the street. I believe it had to be connected to the American Express building. As I went inside, through all the rubble, where all the ambulances and all the fire trucks were, I saw body

S. YIORAS

parts all over the place. I only found one person alive in the whole thing. It was a black female, who I believe worked for a private ambulance. I'm not sure if it was Metro Care or something like that. She had a broken leg.

I yelled to some firemen that were standing by I believe it must have been 1 World Trade Center because No. 2 fell first, right? Yes. I had told them, you know, if they could come and help me with this female over here that had a broken leg, but they had injuries that they were taking care of also. Then a couple of minutes later, about five, six people showed up. I think some were civilians and I think one or two people were off-duty EMS personnel. I really don't know their names, but they were wearing IDs.

We grabbed a stair chair out of one of the damaged ambulances that were there. I believe it was a New York Hospital ambulance. We took a stair chair. We carried her across the rubble and I believe it was to the American Express building, underneath that overpass that connects to it.

As soon as we got underneath the overpass, the second tower collapsed. A lot of it fell close to the building and hit me. A couple of things hit me. I

S. YIORAS

don't know exactly what hit me. I believe it was some bricks or wood. I really don't know. I couldn't tell you. But it hurt. It hurt.

We got stuck inside the American Express building. We couldn't get out of there. We couldn't find no way. We couldn't see anything. We couldn't breathe. I mean, I thought I was going to buy it. I really thought I was going to die in there.

Q. Were you with other crew members, with the patient, that girl?

A. With the patient and the people that helped me take the patient out of there. We were all stuck in that building. I can't tell you how long we were in there. It must have been about 15, 30 minutes. I'm just taking a wild guess. I'm saying anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes before firemen came in and took us out the back way of the building. Initially, when we tried to get out, all the doors were blocked from debris. We couldn't break any of the glass doors because they were so thick. I even tried breaking one of the glass doors with an oxygen tank and it wouldn't even break.

But finally, it seemed, like I said, 15 to 30 minutes before we got out with the firemen, and the only reason they came in and got us out was because

S. YIORAS

they saw us go into the building after the second collapse. I should say before the second collapse they saw us go into the building.

Basically, they took me to the treatment center and gave me a little bit of oxygen, but then I went right back out there. I went back out there looking for my guys and everything else. I found a couple of them. I couldn't find Lillo. Abrille, I couldn't find him either, but I had heard word that he was safe; he might have been injured but he was safe. He was down in Battery Park, I believe. One of the other crews from 45 Adam, I found Mr. Adams roaming around and he was looking for his partner, Mr. Diaz. But we later found out that Mr. Diaz was in the hospital being treated for a head injury, a minor head injury.

Basically, for the rest of the day we were just looking for crew members, firemen. We were looking for any patients or anybody that we could find, and basically that was it.

Q. Were your radios working at that time?

A. The radio was working. That's another thing I have to say. Initially, when I found that patient after the first collapse, I had called on the radio to

S. YIORAS

the command center to see if they could send me somebody over to help me with the patient, and they had said something like, "We have a lot of patients out here and we're trying to deal with it. See if you could deal with it by yourself inside over there where you are." After that, luckily, the other people came by and they helped me. But otherwise, most of the time I didn't hear anything on the radio except for that one little conversation that I had.

Q. In the parking garage, you didn't see any Chiefs or anyone higher than what you were?

A. You know, they might have been.

Q. You couldn't see anything?

A. But I really couldn't see who it was. I know I saw the Chiefs with the white hats, they were out there and everything else, but I just couldn't tell you who it was. I really couldn't name them. I know after the second collapse I saw Chief McCracken, Chief Villani, and they were all heading down towards Battery Park to regroup, and that was like after the second collapse.

Q. Basically, after the collapse, you really found no patients?

A. No patients, nobody alive. They wouldn't let

S. YIORAS

us go back into the scene. They cordoned it off because they wanted to keep as many people out because they didn't know what else was going to happen, and they also said that some of the other buildings might not be safe also. So, basically, we tried to see if there were any patients or anybody coming up to us. But by then everybody had either been dispersed or been taken over to the treatment center at Stuyvesant High School, I think it was. Basically that was it.

MR. CUNDARI: Lieutenant, I'd like to thank you for taking your time and conducting this interview. This concludes the interview. The time now is 10:40.

File No. 9110395

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

RONALD COYNE

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick



MR. CUNDARI: The date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1122 hours. I'm George Cundari, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

A. Ronald Thomas Coyne, EMT, Battalion 44.

Q. EMT Coyne, can you please tell us the events of that tragic day of September 11?

A. On September 11, we had just finished dropping off a patient at Kings County Hospital, and at approximately 8:48 a.m., we heard screaming over the radio. We were just about going available. I called the dispatcher and said if she needed us, because I wasn't sure where exactly this incident was taking place, but I told the dispatcher we were available to go wherever they needed us.

She designated us to go to Vesey Street in lower Manhattan for what at the time they were considering it to be just a plane accident.

We shot down over by the Brooklyn Bridge. When we went over the bridge, we noticed both towers were on fire. We made the turn around off the Brooklyn Bridge to go on the FDR, and we were stopped by the

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Police Department to ask if we can carry a doctor. I got on the radio, and I notified the dispatcher that we were going to transport the doctor over to the World Trade Center.

They acknowledged it, and when we came out of the tunnel of -- I'm not sure what street you call it. I guess the Westside Highway, the tunnel out of the FDR. We got approximately over to the Vista Hotel, which was on Liberty, between Liberty and the first building, and at that time we saw people running towards us and cars gathering all over the place, police cars, ambulances, and then we noticed the tower was coming down.

Q. When you first arrived, the towers started collapsing?

A. Soon as we arrived, the south -- the north tower had come down. I know it sounds weird, but that's the way it was.

Q. There is a north tower, south tower. You think the south tower was the first collapse? You mean before the first collapse or the --

A. I was there when the first collapse happened.

Q. So it was most likely the south tower.

A. So then it was the south?

RONALD COYNE

Q. Yeah.

A. Okay. I could be wrong in the way this is. The tower had collapsed. There was debris from the roof hitting the front of the ambulance, and we couldn't see a thing. I couldn't back up. I couldn't go forward. There were too many pedestrians running around.

I decided at that time to shut off all the vents, keep the lights on, and I told my partner, who was small enough, to try and climb through the back window that separates the cab and the back of the bus to go into the back with the doctor, and at that time I had asked the doctor to open up the NBC kit.

Q. Do you know the doctor's name?

A. I don't remember offhand.

It started to snow gray, and I could start getting a little field of vision. I decided at this point where -- because traffic was stuck behind us and on the side of us, that we would keep the ambulance where it was.

I got out and I started picking up these little old men, who were trying to cross the street, and they couldn't breathe, and I picked them up over my shoulder, two-by-two and carried them to the back of

RONALD COYNE

the ambulance and packed in approximately 15 people.

With that, I saw a Poland Spring truck, and the guy told me to start handing out water, if I needed it, and I took two cases and started heading out to the first tower that fell. I was giving out water to people as they were walking by, telling them where my ambulance was, so they could be triaged there, and then sent over to wherever they were going to send them.

Q. Did you have any radio communications at that time?

A. I couldn't hear anything. The dispatcher couldn't hear me. I couldn't reach the dispatcher. My portable wasn't working.

My main concern was I knew that we had people up there. I knew we had our own up there, and I knew we had a lot of civilians over there, and I just wanted to get up and try and do a rapid triage as fast as possible.

My partner is very new on the job, you know. I didn't think she would be as well-suited to do that job right then and there, so as I went up towards the north building, I noticed I couldn't gain entrance around that area because of the destruction of the vehicles, the building, so what I did was I went up, I

RONALD COYNE

would say, around Cedar or Barclay. No, Cedar. I'm not sure which way this is going.

Q. This is north, this is south on the map. You started heading north?

A. I started up heading up out of the tunnel.

Q. Yes, you came out of the tunnel, which is not the Battery Tunnel, but by the ferry, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. You said that was the Westside Highway?

A. Right, we were here. This building came down first.

Q. The north tower, you mean?

A. I couldn't gain entry to the south tower, so what I did was I walked around Trinity and walked up in between the towers over by Washington Avenue, and I came up in between the Custom's building and the World Trade Center, northeast plaza of the building, and I explained -- there was a group of people that were trying to open up the exit door on 6 World Trade Center, but they couldn't because of debris that had fallen all over the place, so I cleared the debris, and I went in the basement, and I had counted 25 people.

I told them, you know -- there were all guys. I told them to gather around five-gallon water

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bottles. I showed them how to make a make-shift masks, and I was there to lead them over towards the pier where they were picking people up. At that point in time, you know, I had time to do six masks by this point, and at that time I went back up the same street, the same route, around Washington Avenue, and came up in between the buildings, and I was looking at the car garages, and the cars in the street, and me and three buddies of mine from street crime were breaking windows in the cars to look for infants and adults, unconscious adults, because there was so much dust on them that we couldn't see through.

At that point, I just heard a thunderous sound, and I looked up, and I saw the building start to topple, start to sway, and it was swaying our way, and we just yelled, "Run" and I tried to run as fast as I could, and I saw an SUV parked, and I figured that that would take some, you know, some of the hit, because I knew I couldn't out run the building, and by the time it took me to break the back window of the SUV, my safety coat was already on fire. My socks were on fire. I was already covered with soot and all sorts of particles that were coming out of the building. I climbed into the truck, and that's when pieces of the

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building lifted the truck and came through the front window and flipped the truck over, and I was trapped in there for approximately 25 minutes to a half hour.

I was falling asleep. I knew I was dying. I just prayed that I wouldn't be found like that. I felt as if somebody was giving me fresh oxygen. I was able to dig my way out myself, out of the truck. I crawled into the street through ash and the fire, and I found a door, and I opened up the door, and it was a tavern. I ran over behind the bar, and I took the seltzer spray and started washing my eyes and my face, because it was burning, and washing my back. I just -- I was just covered with burns and bruises, and I couldn't breathe at all.

What little breath I had was just whatever I could get. After that it started to clear up again. I searched the entire building to make sure there was nobody in it. There was nobody found. Whatever apartment doors were open, I just took a peak in to see if anybody was on the floor, and then I automatically locked the doors and left. Then I left the building, and I went back to try and find my partner, and I noticed that a lot of the ambulances were torched, flipped over, demolished, and I couldn't find my bus.

RONALD COYNE

All the buses there were the same. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what to think. I didn't know where my partner was. I didn't know where the doctor was, and I was just walking around and bringing people over to stores that had not been affected by it and putting them inside the stores so that they can at least get some water and air. Then I ended up running into one of the engine companies.

I explained to the captain who I was. I identified myself. I showed him my shield and my rank and told him that I couldn't find anybody else from EMS, and that I would be more than happy to stay with them until a commanding officer finds me and tells me where to go. That was directly in front of the north tower. There was a fruit place over by the corner, on one of the corners, and it had already been blown apart by the blast and the collapse. I entered it. I started washing off fruit. I had firemen complaining of cramping in their stomachs and in their legs, and I knew their potassium was dropping. So I was bringing out bananas, and apples and all sorts of fruit, baskets of them to hand them out to these firemen so that they could continue to do their job. I ran into Chief McCracken, and he had asked where I had been, and I



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explained to him that I was trapped in the vehicle for about a half hour, and I didn't know where anybody was. I couldn't find my partner. He ordered me to go to a triage station and start triaging patients.

So after he pointed out where the triage area was, I found my partner, and I just fell to the floor, and I started to cry, because I really, really would never forgive myself if I lost her. I was triaging the patients with the medic from St. Mary's and my partner, and we kept trying to go in, and we were pulling out bodies.

I was ordered to go into the ambulances that were next to it and strip whatever I could out of them, ALS and BLS supplies. We had numerous contaminated equipment that we were -- me and one of the -- a buddy of mine, whose name is Roger from St. Mary's, ran over to Beekman to drop them off to be cleaned off, and they gave us a new ambulance and brought it back.

We still couldn't find our ambulance. We didn't know where it was. I saw hands and legs, and I saw a woman impaled into a wall across the street from the building. I saw people jumping out of the windows when they were collapsing, going through cars and hitting the pavement, and that was only early in the

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morning. We sat there all day taking care of firemen basically. A lieutenant came up to me and told me that I didn't look well, that I should -- I should go back to Brooklyn and go get checked out. I kept telling her that there was more work to be done. She said she was going to check on me in a little bit, and 12 o'clock that night she decided to send me back to my division, at approximately 2330, twelve o'clock, she decided to send me back to the division.

[REDACTED]



[Redacted text block containing approximately 25 lines of obscured content]

RONALD COYNE

[REDACTED]

MR. CUNDARI: I'd like to thank you for  
conducting this interview. The time is 11:46.  
This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110437

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CHEVALO WILSON-DeBRIANO

Interview Date: January 11, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

C.WILSON-DeBRIANO

LIEUTENANT DUN: Today is January 11th, 2002. The time is 0615 hours. My name is Richard Dun working for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name.

A. Chevalo Wilson-DeBriano.

Q. And your rank?

A. Paramedic.

Q. Where is your location of work?

A. Battalion 50.

Q. In your own words, just tell us what happened on the day of September 11th.

A. I was here. I was extra personnel, so I didn't have a partner. I was instructed by the -- or actually I saw it in the lounge, an incident happened, the World Trade Center, fire, listen on Citywide radio. They said it was a plane hit. They put MERV 4 on standby. I was told by the supervisor to stand by, if MERV 4 was to roll, I would have to go on with the MERV. The second plane hit and then we were told to roll, go to Battalion 46 in Elmhurst, Queens, and stand by there.

We ended up going over to Battalion 46. We stood by momentarily. Then we were told to roll. We

C.WILSON-DeBRIANO

continued from there down Queens Boulevard. We had a view of the burning World Trade Centers. When we crossed the 59th Street bridge, we heard over the radio people screaming that there was a building collapse. We crossed Manhattan, went down the west side. We went down past Vesey Street, past the pedestrian bridge. We stopped the MERV. There was a lot of smoke. We started helping a few injured firefighters who came on the MERV van for treatment.

Then we felt a rumble. My partner, who was the driver, told me that he thinks there's another collapse, so we have to egress by foot and leave the vehicle, and it was a rapid, running egress from the area with other police officers, firefighters and civilians to avoid the debris and dust cloud.

Q. Do you know exactly where you left the vehicle, where the vehicle was parked?

A. Yes. Approximately, looking at this thing, I believe it was beside 6 World Trade Center. Yes. So a little south of Vesey Street on the West Side Highway.

Q. Okay.

A. We continued. I ended up walking up to Chelsea Piers. Then I walked back down to try to find my partner. I didn't find him for hours, but he was



C.WILSON-DeBRIANO

okay. The vehicle was in bad shape as far as dust. It had to be cleaned off. Then we moved the MERV van over to another location. I'm just trying to remember the actual street.

Q. When you first arrived, did you see a lot of debris, a lot of chaos?

A. Yes, a lot of chaos, a lot of smoke. You couldn't really see.

Q. Was there a lot of debris on the ground or engine parts, body parts?

A. No, no, I didn't see any of that. I didn't see any of that, no. We were on the West Side Highway, so I think we were still a distance from that.

Q. All right. So after the first collapse, you relocated?

A. Well, no. The first collapse had already occurred.

Q. So you were there for the second collapse?

A. The second collapse, yes.

Q. Then after the second collapse, you relocated down to --

A. Well, as I was saying, when we were crossing the 59th Street bridge, that's when the first collapse occurred. So by the time then we got into Manhattan,

C.WILSON-DeBRIANO

we went to the West Side Highway and we stopped the van, we stopped the MERV van, and we started treating some firefighters. Then the second collapse happened.

Q. Okay. Then you egressed.

A. Then we had to egress by foot.

Q. How long after did you go back to your vehicle?

A. That took a while. I believe it took around three hours. Yes, around three hours to get back there.

Q. Did you see any chiefs that you recognized who were in the plaza or wherever you were?

A. In that immediate area, no.

Q. No officers?

A. No, I didn't see it. No. Other than when I walked up and walked to Chelsea Piers. That's the only time I really saw EMS people. I only saw vehicles passing.

Q. Were they parked and covered with debris or were they voluntaries just lining up to go in?

A. At Chelsea Piers?

Q. On the walk up.

A. On my walk up I mainly just saw some dust-covered vehicles but mainly just emergency

C.WILSON-DeBRIANO

vehicles going in and leaving the area.

Q. Then what did you do after you got to Chelsea Piers?

A. I got to Chelsea Piers. They were just lining up. It seemed like there was a lot of confusion there. But I couldn't find my driver. I had to check all around to see if the driver was there and he wasn't there, so I started going back, I started walking back to the area.

Q. You left the MERV down there?

A. Yes. The MERV was left down by Vesey Street, yes.

Q. So you walked. Did you ever find your partner that day?

A. I did find him. He said he just ran a different direction. We had got split up and I did find him hours later.

Q. Did you triage people at Chelsea or did you do any work at Chelsea?

A. At Chelsea, no. They were just lined up there.

Q. So that was the end of the day?

A. No. We went back. We went to the MERV van. It had a lot of dust on it, but the driver had

C.WILSON-DeBRIANO

relocated it to another location. Man, if I could just remember the street. It was the street that JFK Jr. lived on.

Q. Okay.

A. But that street, we were there, and then from there, from that location, then we started -- we set up for triage there and we were pretty much there most of the day, then, most of the day, setting up for triage, and that's where we ended up viewing the collapse of 7 World Trade Center, which was another time when we ended up having to egress a little bit.

Q. So about what time did you end the day?

A. The day was ended -- I worked 23 1/2 hours straight. So, if I started at 7:00, it ended like at 6:00 in the morning by the time we got back.

LIEUTENANT DUN: That concludes the interview with Chevalo. Thank you very much for your time.

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File No. 9110438

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

CAPTAIN JOSEPH RIVERA

Interview Date: January 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McCOURT: The date is January 14th, 2002. My name is Tom McCourt, investigator for the New York City Fire Department. We are currently at the World Trade Center command post. Being interviewed is Captain Joseph Rivera from Division 4.

Captain Rivera, would you identify yourself, please.

CAPTAIN RIVERA: Captain Rivera, shield number 9815 of the Division 4, Queens division. I'm the duty captain assigned there.

Q. Captain, could you please tell me the events that transpired from your perspective on September 11th, 2001?

A. What actually transpired -- in fact, I'll start from the beginning. On September 11th was my first day assigned to the borough of Queens. I was transferred from the borough of the Bronx. I was to report to their division office at 0800 hours in the morning, which I did.

While there I was awaiting the arrival of Chief Carrasquillo to have a one-on-one with him, which is when the incident occurred. He

called me up and told me that he was on his way in and that we would meet downstairs and head into the World Trade Center incident.

We met downstairs, got into his vehicle. We responded, he, myself, his aide and an EMT. I have no recollection of the name.

Q. Do you remember who his aide was?

A. His aide was Sal San Sangeniti was his last name. I don't remember who the EMT was.

We were in route to Manhattan. We exited the Midtown Tunnel. When we exited the Midtown Tunnel, the second plane had already hit. We arrived there roughly about 9:30 in the morning.

When we got there, we left the car on West Street down by I believe it was Rector. I'm not sure. I think it was Rector. And we walked our way up to where the command post was, which was opposite building number two, Two World Trade Center.

Q. What was the action going around at that location at that time? What was the activity?

A. It was total mayhem. There were people

running all over the place. There were body parts on the floor that we noticed. There was rubble. There was just total chaos.

As we were walking up to the command post, we were trying to get a gist of what was going on. When we finally got to the command post, we met with Chief Gombo, Captain Sickles and Lieutenant Moore, who were already there along with other fire officials and some firefighters. This wasn't inside the building; this was across the street on West Street.

Q. West and --

A. West -- I believe it was between Liberty and Vesey.

Q. Okay.

A. On the other side of the street.

While there, we were looking up at the fire and we heard a loud rumble; and when we looked up, that was the start of the collapse. When the building collapsed, ironically we had a building behind us that had an underground garage, and we all ran into that underground garage. In that underground garage we were trapped for approximately 10 to 15 minutes.



There were a number of injuries, minor injuries. A lot of us were breathing in a lot of that powder, whatever you want to call it. Anyway, we managed to get out of there. A firefighter found a stairwell that brought us up about two and a half stories.

We managed to go up two and a half stories, come up out of the building from the rear and managed to go around up towards -- what is this over here? Up towards North End, running down toward North End to where we established a command post on Chambers and West.

Before that we also got caught in the second collapse. While we were running, we were running and trying to find cover in some of the surrounding buildings. Every time we got close to one of the buildings, they were telling us there was a gas leak and we should get away from that building.

Chief Carrasquillo was under the impression that we may have left some people behind, so we went back to make sure that everybody was accounted for.

Q. After the second collapse?

A. After the first collapse.

Q. After the first collapse.

A. So when we went back, making sure that everybody was accounted for, we got caught in the second collapse, but we managed to get out of that right away.

What we did is we ran towards the water around to North Street and up towards Chambers and West, which was where the command post was established. While there I took command of the MERV and all of the volunteers that were coming, hospital staff, doctors, nurses, et cetera.

Q. When you went back to check for the missing people, did you find everybody that was missing?

A. Everybody that was with us was accounted for. That was Chief Carrasquillo, chief's aide Sal San Sangeniti, Chief Gombo, Captain Sickles, Lieutenant Moore.

Q. Anybody injured at that point?

A. Lieutenant Terranova.

Well, the one that was injured was Lieutenant Moore. All the rest were overcome by this powder, this thing that we were breathing.

Then from there we were on for a good 25, 26 hours, the regular operation.

Q. Right. You stayed there the whole --

A. Yeah.

Q. Until the next day?

A. Yeah. We were able to go home and come back the next day and start it all over again.

I wasn't injured. I breathed in a lot of the stuff. Luckily I wasn't injured.

I don't know what to say. I think we were all traumatized. I think the only real injury that I remember was Lieutenant Moore.

Q. What was the extent of his injuries?

A. I think it was a leg injury. He hasn't been back on duty, but I think it was a leg injury.

Q. Is there anything else that you can add or you might want to add to it?

A. No. So many things happened. After we left the building that we were trapped in, a number of things had happened. There was a building there that had senior citizens supposedly trapped in the basement, so we were trying to get them evacuated. Then they told us

not to, that it was probably safer to keep them in the basement because of all of the dust in the air.

Then there were other people that would run to us with minor injuries, cuts and bruises and stuff. We were trying to give aid when we were in route to -- actually running for our lives, running away from the site to the command post.

Q. Did you experience any radio problems or communication problems or anything like that at all?

A. I think everybody experienced radio problems. We were trying the contact each other to make sure everybody was accounted for. We couldn't get across. Too many people on the radio. The radio traffic was horrendous.

Q. All right. There's nothing else you can add --

A. No, that's it. A half hour felt like 30 days. But that's it. That's all I can think of now.

Q. Okay, Captain. Thank you very much.

MR. McCOURT: The time is 557 hours.

That concludes this interview.

File No. 9110454

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KENNETH DAVIS

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

K. DAVIS

LIEUTENANT DUN: The date is January 15, 2002. The time is 1540 hours. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

PARAMEDIC DAVIS: Kenneth Davis, paramedic, Shield No. 3204 of Battalion 22.

Q. In your own words, could you please tell us what happened on the day of September 11th, 2001.

A. The morning of September 11th, I was going to do some volunteer work for Mark Green in Manhattan, and we met in Long Island City at the union office. From the union office we were going over to the city, a bunch of us in a van, and we took the 59th Street bridge. As we were driving over the 59th Street bridge, just looking out the window, we saw a plane hit the World Trade Center, what we thought was a plane, and out of disbelief, I was like did anybody else just see that? They're like what? I said a plane just hit the Trade Center. Everybody was like, oh, yeah, right. When they looked, you could see the flames and the smoke starting and they're like, wow, it must have been one of the little planes. I said, no, it looked like a jet. So now everybody was in panic because we didn't know, it was a clear day and we figured, well,

K. DAVIS

is it terrorists, is it accidental? It was such a clear day, you can avoid it but...

So we went over to Mark Green's office and we got on the phone and called to see where they needed us. We figured if something big like that, you'd find out where everybody's got to be. They asked us to go up to Metropolitan to pick up an ambulance up there and whatever equipment they could give us. A bunch of us shot up there in a van. From there we went down the FDR Drive towards the Trade Center and there were just thousands of people running towards you on the FDR. It was surreal.

So we got down to South Street, to the ferry terminal, and set up a triage station. There was a doctor there, an anesthesiologist, I believe Mark Heath was his name. I know he shot a lot of video on his digital camera while he was there also. I helped him set up triage in an area upstairs in the ferry terminal.

Q. Were you receiving a lot of patients at this time?

A. Not what we were expecting because a lot of people were just getting out of there.

Q. Running by you.

K. DAVIS

A. Just running. Basically, you saw people that were wounded and you were grabbing them because they were in such a state of shock that they didn't know what was going on any more than you did and they just wanted to get out of there. Some people, as you were grabbing them, they didn't want to sit still for anything, so you were just grabbing their clothes and using their clothing as bandages and just say okay, fine, hold this and keep going, you know, don't go back that way. I saw some patients at the ferry, and the building had already collapsed, the first tower, so we went down, a couple of us, to the site to see if we could help down there, and it was just sheer madness. You couldn't see anything with all the dust in the air.

Q. Did the first building go down yet?

A. Yes, the first building had already come down.

Q. Okay.

A. What made it really bad was just trying to breathe. It's not fog, it's ash, and you could only see so far. But, literally, we didn't have masks yet or anything because we just were there. We found bottled water or whatever and cracked hydrants. You were just scooping water into your mouth and spitting



K. DAVIS

mud out and people were running by you and they're running in every direction because they didn't know which way to go.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos and confusion?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see any officers from the service?

A. There were police officers everywhere, firemen everywhere, apparatus all over the place. It was kind of like a discotheque, the easiest way to describe it, the lights from the trucks and the fog machines, that's how it looked, and people screaming and just running and you're tripping over each other.

Q. So did you leave your vehicle at the South Street Seaport?

A. We were transported up. They had taken a couple of patients to the hospital.

Q. Which one? Beekman?

A. I believe Beekman. So we hopped a ride up and jumped down from there and ran up there.

Q. And went on foot?

A. Yes.

Q. So at this time you had no longer --

A. I no longer had a vehicle. But they were everywhere. Some were crushed already, melted

K. DAVIS

looking. But they were everywhere. The keys were in them. You could get in if you needed it and go. But it was a mess, going through the ashes, some places a foot thick, two feet thick.

Q. This is still the first building?

A. Yes. The second building had just started to come down and you could feel the rumble in the ground, and we were like, it can't be the train because you know it's not running. So we all started to run down the street and the building had come down.

Q. Which way did you run?

A. Honestly, I don't remember which street I was on. It was just, like I said, it was chaos, and running down the block I had tripped and fallen and my left knee blew out and I fell on it and I was in a lot of pain. I was just holding it and a fireman and a police officer grabbed me and dragged me up the street. But meanwhile, while I was laying there, I reached down to see what I had fell over and it was somebody's lower leg that had apparently got blown off them in the explosion. So that was pretty sick to say the least.

I got up the street, got some tape from one of the firemen up at the corner that had some supplies,

K. DAVIS

I taped up my knee and I kept working. Again, it was just trying to get people out of there, get them to different hospitals and whatever.

Q. Did you see any EMS officers that you recognized?

A. At Ground Zero you'd see so many people.

Q. Do you remember in what location around Ground Zero?

A. Over on the side of -- well, I saw some people by Trinity Church.

Q. So that's down here. Trinity is down this way.

A. Then over on the other side by City Hall.

Q. City Hall is over this way.

A. Yes. They were setting up in a building. They were starting to set up inside one of the buildings over there.

Q. So you were more on --

A. On this side, yes.

Q. The east side; you were on the east side?

A. Right. The eastern side, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. It was on Broadway, I believe, a building on Broadway. They were setting up inside the building

K. DAVIS

that they wanted to get patients in there and that building started to tremble a little. So they said, hey, let's get out of here, too. So everything we had just brought in there we started handing back and forth like a big convoy, just handing it back and forth to each other out of there. Then they were going to set up in City Hall Park, and I said you can't, it's outside, you can't have patients in all this soot, you can't breathe. So then they were moving them down to another building over that way and I said, well, they had enough people there. My knee is really hurting. I said, if something else collapses, I'm not going to be able to run, so let me get back down to the ferry terminal and help there. So that's when I went back to the ferry terminal.

Q. That was South Ferry?

A. Right.

Q. Because they had (inaudible)?

A. Yes. This is Whitehall Street, whatever it is.

Q. South Ferry.

A. So we were over there and we had the triage set upstairs, and basically it was just a lot of bumps and bruises that we were seeing because a lot of people

K. DAVIS

were just getting on boats and ferry boats and leaving and they had barges that pulled up, people just got on them to get them out of the city, to get them over to Brooklyn or to Jersey, wherever they took them. But it was a lot of bumps and bruises, a few broken bones, gashes, cuts. It was not as many patients as we really thought we were going to see.

Q. Did you see anybody that were missing that you know of?

A. Not that I know of. I know people that are missing or have been declared dead and I know of them. I don't recall if I saw them or not that morning because some of them I was close to, I honestly don't remember if I saw them that morning or if I'm just remembering them in my head because I saw lots of people there. It's just crazy. It was craziness. You'd hear the alarms from some of the firemen's Scott packs going off.

Q. Did you have a radio that day?

A. No. I didn't have radios they give out, and if you had one, you couldn't get through to anybody because everybody was screaming.

Q. That was the thing, because they're trying to clarify, people who had radios, were they able to

K. DAVIS

communicate?

A. I don't think so. Like every fireman that I was around that had one --

Q. Mayday Mayday.

A. It was all Maydays, it was guys yelling we're over here, we're over there, we got one here. It was nuts. The police that were down there were really -- they were phenomenal. They were just grabbing stuff and helping everybody. The firemen, they're used to doing the disaster stuff, but it was just so overwhelming. But the police were really -- they were a lot of help. I would say, hey, can you grab this and they were like yeah. It was really good.

Q. So about what time did you wrap up?

A. Well, I went back to the ferry terminal after I got hurt and I stayed there until almost 11:00 o'clock that night before they told me it's now time for me to go to the hospital. I would have stayed. I guess the adrenaline keeps you going.

Q. Did you go to the hospital?

A. Yes. I ended up going on the ferry over to Staten Island to St. Vincent's. They x-rayed me, medicated me and all, and I went home. Since then I've had to have surgery on my leg.

K. DAVIS

But it was pretty intense over there. I know guys that were looking for their ambulances when they went back, they weren't there. Somebody could have just used it or whatever. But it was weird. You'd go down the street and see parts of an airplane, the wheels, that were in the middle of an intersection in one corner and it's part of a plane. You don't expect to see that in Manhattan.

LIEUTENANT DUN: Okay. This concludes the interview with Kenneth Davis. The time now is 1550 hours.

File No. 9110455

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JOSEPH JEFFERSON

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis



J. JEFFERSON

LIEUTENANT DUN: Today is January 16, 2002. The time is 7:40. My name is Richard Dun working with the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with...

PARAMEDIC JEFFERSON: Joseph Jefferson, paramedic from Battalion 26, Shield No. 2410.

Q. In your own words, can you just tell us what happened on the day of September 11th, 2001.

A. Basically, we were doing our tour of duty or we were in the beginning stages of our tour of duty and we were at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, we were in the Bronx, which is about 173rd Street and Grand Concourse, when we heard that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. We were still basically finishing up. Then we heard that the second plane hit. We were in contact with the dispatcher, who said that she needed some units to go down there. So we were dispatched to go down to the World Trade Center. So we left from there and went down to the World Trade Center.

Q. Did you take the streets or did you go to the highways?

A. We took the streets to the highway, basically.

Q. Okay. When you got down there, how was it?

J. JEFFERSON

What was it like when you pulled up or when you got close to the site?

A. Well, once we got -- we took the FDR and we came around the back, the back way, up West Street from --

Q. South Ferry.

A. South Ferry, that exit. When we got down there, it was just almost like a death silence. I guess you could say it looked like a war zone I guess.

Q. Did you see a lot of debris?

A. You could see part of the plane or what we thought might have been. There were cars on fire. There were body parts.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos, people running, trying to get away?

A. From the angle that we approached, from that side, there wasn't a lot going on. There were numerous vehicles that were heading towards Ground Zero, I guess, which is what we call it now.

Q. At that point, when you got there, did the first building collapse already?

A. No. We got there before the buildings came down.

Q. Before the buildings came down. So the

J. JEFFERSON

buildings were still standing?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So as we drove up, I guess we got to -- I'm looking at the picture now. I'm trying to see where is West.

Q. This is going uptown and that's downtown.

A. So we were coming up this way and there was somebody --

Q. Liberty and West? There was a triage station.

A. We actually never made it up to the triage center. This is the tower right here, right?

Q. Right.

A. This is the first one that came down?

Q. Right.

A. As we got to about here, traffic was being diverted to go from the northbound lane to the southbound. They were setting up the vehicles there. We turned to go up that way and a firefighter came running out from one of the towers and he was basically saying are you guys medics? He flagged us down, are you guys medics? We're like, yeah, what's going on? He said, well, one of our firefighters is down and we

J. JEFFERSON

need some help. We have EMTs in there and they're screaming for medics. So I stopped the vehicle, came around, grabbed my trauma bag. My partner got out of the vehicle and said you want me to grab the other stuff or what? So I said okay, yeah, grab it and run ahead a little bit to see what they have.

Q. Is that where you left your vehicle and that was the last time you saw the vehicle or you got back to it?

A. We got back to it.

Q. Oh, okay. Because people left vehicles.

A. Right. So I guess the vehicle was parked on like the side street.

Q. On the west side before Liberty?

A. Right. So as I went down that block towards the World Trade Center, No. 2 building, they were bringing him up on a stretcher and we actually met him on the corner there, and they had their vehicle and the BLS vehicle was there and they were in the back. So I jumped in to see and it was the firefighter who had I think got hit by someone that had jumped out.

Q. Do you remember his name?

A. No. I don't recall. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

J. JEFFERSON

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Plus I don't know where

my partner is. My partner never met me at the vehicle. So she said, well, just go to the hospital. So basically what I did was I went back into the vehicle, I grabbed my equipment and I exited the vehicle, closed the door, and the BLS took him to the

J. JEFFERSON

hospital with about four firefighters.

So I went back to where I believed the vehicle was supposed to be but it wasn't there. So I said where's my bus? Anybody seen 302? Anybody seen 302? He said yeah, yeah, he went off that way. I said what? He said yeah, your partner took the vehicle. I said no. I was like he didn't leave me. I know he didn't. So it was like where is he? So then I was looking around, I turned back around, and right about where I had met the other guy, my partner pulled the vehicle up here --

Q. To Liberty?

A. To Liberty.

-- to try and meet us and somehow we missed each other. But the vehicle was there, but he wasn't. So I went to the vehicle, I went to open the door and the door was locked. I went around to the other side to try and see if I could get the equipment out, and as I was standing there, I heard this rumbling and I looked up and the building was coming down.

Q. That was the first building coming down?

A. That was the first building, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So I took off and I ended up hiding on -- I

J. JEFFERSON

ran past -- I guess that's 90. The building that was the next over is 90 West. I remember I passed that building (inaudible) into the building. So I turned around to run into the building, but the stuff was coming down so fast that I wasn't able to get into the building. So I ended up hiding in the windowsill trying to cover up and basically the stuff was coming past me like an avalanche, you know, it sounds like a freight train. So I looked back and I saw like this big piece of wall about -- it had to be about maybe four feet long and about three feet wide or something like that, it came across my back, knocked me down to my knees. I was like, God, I'm going to get buried alive here because there wasn't that much space. I tried to break the window to get into the window and there was a fence, a gate inside of the window, so I couldn't climb into the building through there. So I was just there waiting until it all stopped.

Once it stopped, you know, I'm sure it sounds very familiar, it was like just nothing, just silence and you couldn't see because of the cloud of dust.

Q. Did you have a radio that day?

A. I had a radio.

Q. Were there any transmissions going on?

J. JEFFERSON

A. At that point I didn't have the radio.

Q. Okay.

A. But it was just silence. Then, trying to breathe, it was like you started coughing and gagging. Then you started hearing people calling out for help (inaudible). I stood there for a couple of seconds and then I heard a couple of secondary explosions and some vehicles were engulfed in flames, you know, they were on fire. So I go this is not the place to be. I hope I'm talking up loud enough. I grabbed my trauma bags and put it back on my shoulder and I started feeling around. I called out for help a couple times for myself and then I realized I'm supposed to be the help. Then I started telling people come towards my voice, come towards my voice, because I knew I was on West Street, I didn't know exactly where, but I knew that, if they were further into where the buildings were, they should probably come out towards this way and walk up towards the South Ferry.

I saw a female cop. She had a flashlight, so she was able to help direct the people who went into one of the buildings, and they had already had some water and they had garbage cans filled with ice set up. So some people came in and began to like wash



J. JEFFERSON

their faces off and stuff like that. There was a vehicle parked, Vehicle 440. It was parked like in front of that building. So I went inside that vehicle and hooked up with an EMT, she was from Jacobi, with a guy who was injured a little bit, he had hurt his leg. So I treated him.

Q. Okay.

A. What else? I mean, it was so much. As I was treating him, another EMT came in and he was hurt. A medic was bringing him and she said Eddie's hurt bad. He had a gash in his back and his arm was broken. So I splinted his arm.

Q. Eddie who?

A. Martinez.

Q. Martinez.

A. The EMT, his last name was Joseph.

Q. From Jacobi?

A. From Jacobi. Lamanna was the medic that brought Eddie over there. But as I splinted his arm and treated him (inaudible). As I splinted his arm, I was helping (inaudible) and stuff like that and we told him grab some equipment because I don't think that this would be a good place, it might be a collapse, it's damaged or crushed, if not totally destroyed. So I

J. JEFFERSON

said, if anything else falls, because I didn't know how much of the building fell, I didn't know whether it was just the top or whatever, I said I don't want us -- being inside the vehicle is not going to be the safest place, so let's just grab some equipment, couple up the 02 and bandages and stuff like that and let's get into this building. Basically we were moving towards, like I said, back towards South Ferry. I hadn't seen any supervision or anybody, basically, except the few people that had been...

So as we went into the next building, I said let's go into this next building, wait a couple of seconds. Other people were coming in. That's when I met up with my partner. We basically experienced almost the same thing. He was hiding in another windowsill because he was unable to get into the buildings. But after that a few more people came in and we said, listen, we're going to try and get you guys out of here, just stay put for a second and just make sure that it clears up a little bit and we're going to get you guys as far to safety as we can.

Eddie Martinez started feeling a little bit worse. I thought that he might be developing a pneumothorax because of the size of the gash in his

J. JEFFERSON

back. It was pretty deep. I sent him with Karen Lamanna and another voluntary EMT in a stair chair with oxygen towards the treatment area. I heard there was some kind of treatment there at South Ferry. I said get him down there, they had some buses or whatever, and I said I'm going to double back and help the people that were left.

Q. Building 2 still didn't come down yet?

A. No. After they went down --

Q. South.

A. South. I went back and I said okay everybody, let's get a head count and see how many people are in here and we're going to start -- so I went back out -- I said stay here and let me just make sure the coast is clear, and as I was going out to go, that's when the second building came down. So I ran back in the building. It felt a little bit safer because it was one of the big buildings. So I sent them as far back into the middle of the building as possible. The windows were shaking. It was like all over again.

After that subsided, a couple more people came trickling in. After cleaning them up, we did a head count and we had like about 20 people. So little

J. JEFFERSON

by little, as it cleared up, we brought them down, went into another little place, you know, it was like taking them section by section, and we got all the way down to where there's like a health club or something that was down there.

Q. New York City Health and Racquet?

A. Right. We got them there and I told them listen, I said remember my name, I'm Paramedic Jefferson, I said I'm going to get you guys out of here, I don't know exactly how, but just stay put. There are some bathrooms facilities here and there are some phones, if you want to make a phone call or something, do that, and I'll be back in a couple minutes and we're going to get you out of here.

So my partner and I left there and started walking down towards south and, funny thing, a lady in a mini school bus drives by and she's like, excuse me, I need to find the Brooklyn Bridge, I need to get across it. I said, ma'am, I can't promise you I can get you across the Brooklyn Bridge, I said, but I need your help. I have about 20 people that I need to get over to the hospital, would you mind giving some assistance? She said I don't know, I've got to ask my boss, I've got to ask my boss. So she calls and

J. JEFFERSON

initially he goes no, no, get back to the house. It's like can you tell him -- he has to have heard on the news, we're in the middle of a crisis here and we really need his help. So she says the paramedics really need the help, and he was like okay. It's like what is he going to say?

Q. You could have commandeered them.

A. Basically, that's what we ended up basically doing. I said tell him that you're giving us a hand. We need the use of this vehicle. So we took it back to the Health and Racquet Club and we got all the people and got them lined up. We had a lady with a baby, this was like an infant, still only maybe a month or two old, a guy with two cats and a lady with a little dog. It ended up being like about 22 people that we put inside the school bus and we drove them up to Bellevue Hospital in the school bus.

After that we doubled back and came back down. We got as far as the Brooklyn Bridge. I said I'll take you to the bridge, ma'am. I can't promise you that you'll get across, but I can take you there. So we brought her back down there and my partner and I walked from the Brooklyn Bridge back to the World Trade Center, and we treated some other firefighters.

J. JEFFERSON

Q. Did you ever make it to a treatment center or a triage center?

A. For us to get looked at?

Q. No. From the Brooklyn Bridge, you went back. You just were free-lancing in the street, helping people?

A. Once we got all the way back there, we ran into one of the chiefs. I forget the name at this time. But basically, once we got all the way back down there, it was still kind of chaotic, but there was still a little order --

Q. There was an EMS officer around at that time?

A. Yes, there was an EMS officer around at that time.

Q. Okay.

A. He said, listen, I want you to gather all our people, try and keep them together here. He sent out a couple of groups to scavenge some equipment together and so we had a little treatment center that we were setting up right on -- I think it was actually right on Liberty towards the water.

Q. Liberty and West. South End Avenue.

A. We were like up in here.

Q. South End Avenue.

J. JEFFERSON

A. So that's where we staged and basically we were treating people and we were helping. I didn't even realize the extent of some of our own -- I think that was -- we stayed there -- I don't even remember exactly what time we left, but I know my partner's shoulder began to hurt more, my wrist was a little swollen, I had a cut, I got a couple of stitches.

Q. So you basically stayed a lot after, like after 9:00 o'clock, roughly?

A. I think we eventually got back here about 9:00, between 8:00 and 9:00, 10:00 o'clock, somewhere around there.

Q. That's good enough.

A. We were there well into the evening.

Q. All right. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. Anything like what? I mean, while I was there, all that we could do was really pray that we would come out alive, everything was happening, and it was just basically God's mercy that we were able to survive.

LIEUTENANT DUN: Okay. That concludes the interview with Mr. Jefferson. The time is 8:00 o'clock.

File No. 9110456

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT WILLIAM TRUCOLLO

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



W. TRUOCOLLO

MR. DUN: Today's date is January 16, 2002.

My name is Richard Dun. The time is 0700 hours.

I'm with the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with William --

A. Truocollo.

Q. Truocollo?

A. Battalion 26, shield number 1585, working 18  
Charlie.

Q. Can you tell me in your own words the events  
leading on September 11, 2001?

A. We were assigned to the tower collapse, at  
which point we went down the -- we went local to  
Manhattan, because the West Side Highway was backed  
up. Once we got down there, we parked in front of 125  
Barclay and that's where we met Chief Wells. He told  
us to get everything on a stretcher, all our equipment,  
and we walked with him and he staged us at Liberty and  
West. Just pretty much watching people jump or fall  
out of the towers. I don't really remember radio  
transmissions because there was so much noise. But we  
maybe were there 10 minutes.

Q. Was there a lot of chaos when you pulled up?

A. Yes. I mean we didn't know where to go  
initially. The Chief happened to pull up right next to

W. TRUOCOLLO

us.

Q. Were there a lot of civilians running around?

A. Yes, there was people running all over the place. A lot of emergency vehicles going back and forth. People almost getting hit by police cars and everything shooting around over there. So from the whole time we were down there, when we went to the staging area, maybe about 10 minutes, 15 minutes. We were told, grab the stretcher, we are going into -- I don't even remember. I think we were going into the Marriott to stage in there. I was just looking up to make sure nobody fell or jumped on us. We got in front of the -- I believe it was the Marriott. I just heard somebody yell run. I tried to run back towards the staging area.

Q. Was that the first collapse?

A. Yes. I woke up. I was partially underneath a -- I don't know. It had to be some type of motor vehicle, because I could see the exhaust and there was a firemen digging my leg, because my legs got buried, the rest of me was underneath the car. That was it.

I remember he pulled me out and I actually thought a plane was coming because of the roaring sound. That's when he told me the tower collapsed. We

W. TRUOCOLLO

went into what was supposed to be a safer location and we were there maybe not even 5 minutes when they evacuated us and then we heard -- I heard another collapse. I don't know if that was 7 or if that was the other tower.

Q. That was probably the other tower. 7 collapsed much later.

A. Later. I was already -- we went through the -- past the West Side Highway and they put me on a boat, the Jersey City police harbor boat and that was it. I went to Jersey.

Q. That was the end of your day?

A. Yes. I mean I was admitted there. I had various injuries and everything.

Q. Because I interviewed your partner (inaudible) than getting hurt (inaudible), triage or anything (inaudible).

A. Yes. Like I said we were staging, we went over there. We were told by Chief Wells we are going into the triage area. The last thing I remember even telling my partner, I was looking up at the towers and the last thing I said was, you know, I don't think we should be near these buildings and that was it. That was really it.

W. TRUOCOLLO

I didn't treat any patients. It was just chaotic. We were just running and screaming. Nobody wanted to be where we were at. Everybody was trying to get away from it.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview. It's 705 hours.

File No. 9110457

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOSEPH CONZO

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. CONZO

MR. DUN: Today is January 16, 2002. The time is 5:45 a.m. My name is Richard Dun of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. Conducting an interview with --

A. JOSEPH CONZO, EMT, shield number 2577, assigned to Battalion 26 in the South Bronx.

Q. At this time in your own words, could you describe the events leading on September 11, 2001?

A. On September 11, 2001, I was assigned to 18 Charlie, tour 2, out of Battalion 26. We responded to the World Trade Center from the Bronx. I'm not sure of the approximate time, but it was after the first plane crash.

En route to the World Trade Center, the second plane hit, half way down there. Going down the West Side Highway, we responded down the West Side Highway and we got down there. I was fortunate enough to park my vehicle 301 by 125 Barclay Street, about 2 or 3 blocks from the World Trade Center.

From there, there was multiple volunteer units, multiple fire apparatuses, PD, so on and so on.

Q. When you got to the scene, was it chaotic, a lot of people?

A. It was pretty much chaotic. Just multiple

J. CONZO

units just coming in and stuff like that. We were told to respond to a staging area which was directly across the street from, I think the Marriott. Directly across the street. That's where everybody was staging up with their equipment and the first Chief I encountered was Chief Charlie Wells, along with Captain Karen DeShore.

Q. Were there a lot of patients, walking wounded around?

A. At that time no, it was just multiple fire suppressions and PD and EMS units. We were all told to stage across the street with our equipment. We were told to put on our helmets, our turnout coats and stuff like that. At that time, there was just multiple fire personnel, fire suppressions running in and out of the buildings, stuff like that. Both towers were burning at the time. There really wasn't any debris coming down from our side and that's it.

As we staged across the street, Chief Charlie Wells grabbed my partner and I and said we are going into the building. From this map here, we entered the Marriott Hotel on Liberty, on west side and Liberty and as soon as we were entering in there with our equipment, we heard what seemed to be a third plane hitting, but I found out later it was the collapse of

J. CONZO

the World Trade Center 2.

As that was happening, Chief Wells instructed us to run. I ran into the building and Chief Wells and my partner ran back towards the staging. I was fortunate enough to seek cover under a table there while the building collapsed and subsequently escaped unharmed.

Q. Were you trapped?

A. Yes, I was trapped for about -- I don't know, a good 15, 20 minutes. It was just total chaos. It was myself and three other firemen. The entrance we had come in was totally sealed off, another entrance was totally sealed off. It was totally pitch black. Dust, debris, just complete serene atmosphere. The only noise that was going on after the rumbling was the firemen's passive alarms going off.

Fortunate enough for us, a wall had collapsed down into the street. We were able to climb out. I didn't even know I was out in the street until I walked into a light pole. That's how black and dark it was.

After getting out and searching for my partner and Chief Wells, I couldn't find them, I proceeded across the street into a store there where I cleared my face and just started searching for



J. CONZO

survivors. I fortunately found my partner about 10 minutes after getting out of the building. He was completely buried under debris and stuff like that. I found him and a fireman.

I grabbed him, we proceeded to walk towards the water and I linked up with Captain DeShore, [REDACTED] and a few other EMTs. We helped evacuate some injured firemen and civilians on to these boats that were coming over from Jersey. I don't know, about 15 minutes after that, the building that we were in collapsed, the second collapse happened.

From then on, my partner was already on the boat.

Q. The second building, was that 7 World Trade Center?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. So that's the third building?

A. Okay. Yes, third building. My partner was already on the boat to Jersey, because he was injured. Karen DeShore, a few other EMTs and firemen were on the boat, and I stood there and I was fortunate enough to commandeer a golf cart, a gator, which was the only thing that could possibly maneuver, so I started evacuating patients to the ferries and stuff like

J. CONZO

that.

Later on, after evacuating a lot of people from the waterway there, I ran into Chief McCracken and became his personal driver, and gatored him for the rest of the day. Then I stood the rest of the day down at South Ferry.

Q. So around what time did you end your day?

A. I ended the day about 1 o'clock that morning.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add?

A. No, that's basically it. We did the best we could. Not I nor anybody else that I spoke to who was down there even imagined these buildings collapsing. We staged where we were told to stage and we just followed orders. We did the best we could.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with JOSEPH CONZO. The time now is 550 hours.

File No. 9110463

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC ROBERTO ABRIL

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

R. ABRIL

MR. MURAD: Today is January 17, 2002. The time is 0800 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, your rank and your command please?

A. Paramedic Abril, Battalion 49.

Q. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 49 in Astoria station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Would you please give us your perspective on that day, on what happened on that tragic day?

A. We were working. We started to work at 8 o'clock. We got a job for an OB comp, somewhere in Astoria, and we went to aid, to help one of the BLS units here, I think it was 5 Adam, with a patient. We ended up going 82 to Elmhurst.

When we were 81 at Elmhurst, we received -- the guy on 6 Zebra told us that we were assigned to the World Trade Center, because a plane had hit one of the buildings. I didn't believe it to begin with and I told Carlos that we had to go to the World Trade Center because there was a plane that crashed into the

R. ABRIL

building.

We took off 63 from Elmhurst. We went down Woodside Avenue to Queens Boulevard and took the Midtown Tunnel through.

Q. Just one question. Sorry to interrupt you. Who was your partner on that day?

A. Carlos Lillo.

Q. Carlos was your partner?

A. We went down to the Midtown Tunnel, but at that point, there was only one plane had hit one of the buildings and the other one was still intact. So we went out to the other side in Manhattan. We went across 34 Street to Tenth Avenue. We went down Tenth Avenue and we took Broadway, West Broadway down to the World Trade Center.

We were stopped at West Broadway and Vesey by one of the Lieutenants there, he told us to bring our vehicles around to where everybody was staging. Instead the staging of the vehicles took place at Washington and Vesey.

At that point is when Carlos took his gear and said well, I'm going to go ahead and go to triage while you park the vehicle. We didn't know -- it looked serious, but we didn't know it was so

R. ABRIL

traumatic.

I parked my vehicle. I asked the Lieutenant if I should leave the keys. He told me no, just to stay by the vehicle, but there were plenty of people pulling me aside to help them out. I remember a lot of leg fractures and extremity fractures. I found myself triaging people. Many of the Metro Care ambulances were sent away with patients, but I mean, when the Lieutenant disappeared, there was nobody else at the triage where they had parked all the vehicles. There was nobody else there.

The initial collapse, not the actual collapse, but the top part of the building collapsed on top of these firemen and cops on West Broadway and Vesey as I was walking towards the building. I was unable to make it any more, because there was a lot of dust.

We witnessed a lot of stuff. We witnessed people falling off the buildings. We witnessed a lot of firemen dying from the initial collapse. You know, all this time Lillo was trying to get to me. He got on the TAC two channel on the radios. He told me that he was on West Broadway in the middle, between World -- I think it was 6 World Trade Center and the north tower.

R. ABRIL

That's when he told me to come over and meet him, so what I did was I went around 6 World Trade Center to try and meet him and at that point is when the north tower collapsed and I couldn't make it there any more.

On the way back, again, a lot of people were pulling at me, telling me to help them and I got some of these people in the ambulance. I kind of drove up a couple of blocks, I think it was Warren Street, I see it now. I think it was Warren Street, where I stopped and let them out and then I went back trying to look for my partner, but I found myself picking up more people and putting them again on Warren Street.

Then I went back a third time. Then I found myself stuck treating an old lady that was in a wheelchair with her daughter I think it was. I tried to -- wheel her back to the ambulance. On the way back to the ambulance, I met up with a couple of other paramedics that they said they were from the Bronx. We were trying to -- it was all chaos. We didn't know what to do, where to go, so between the three of us, we kind of got together and tried to get some of these people out.

Finally again, put some of the patients in

R. ABRIL

this ambulance. I think it was when the south tower collapsed is when we took our last set of people, but it was some of the parking police department, those people that give out the tickets. The last three that I took out with these paramedics and we took them out to, I think it was Canal Street or one of those streets, about 10 blocks away from the actual site.

I went back, but at that point I couldn't go back any more, because it was too much dust. It was a lot of smoke and actually there was a lot of people that needed help. I couldn't go back.

My main concern was to get my partner. I couldn't find him. I kept saying if anybody saw him, but I guess everybody was busy.

Q. Did you happen to find out where Carlos' last location was where he was operating at?

A. Physically I didn't go. I couldn't get there because of what I just said. But he told me it was between the building that we initially saw. He told me between the two buildings, come into the north tower, and that's what I was trying to do. So I figure he was between the 6 World Trade Center and the north tower. Somewhere around there.

Like I said, there was 3 collapses. The



R. ABRIL

first one that the top of the building collapsed. I see here is the northeast plaza building. That building collapsed first.

Q. That was the south tower?

A. Yes, that would make it the south tower, yes. So the top of that building collapsed. Like I said, I witnessed 5 people got killed there. Then it was too much dust. That's when I think I saw Captain Rivera there too. I asked him if he had seen my partner and he said listen, I'm going to go back in there.

Q. Who was that, Captain Rivera?

A. Yes.

Q. Joseph Rivera?

A. Yes, JR.

Q. Okay, JR, fine.

A. I told him listen, I'm missing my partner. We got separated for some reason and I need to go back. I need to find him. He says don't worry about it. I'm going to go back in. You take care of these people and I will go back in and find him. He did. He went back in. That was about it.

When we were -- they didn't let us go to Citywide. They told to us stay on Queens west. The

R. ABRIL

reason how I know that is because there was a lot of traffic and I remember in all the chaos, I wanted to make sense of why people were still going to Rikers Island. Why are people still going to minor injuries when we need a lot of help here.

I remember listening to the radio, to all the normal traffic that you would have, when I know these people would need help. When the initial collapse happened, all my masks ran out. I had like 20 of those -- I think they are class A or class one masks that we always carry. But I gave them out and as soon as -- 5 minutes they were all gone. I remember keeping, I said listen, I got only two left. I had one for myself and one for my partner. I can't give them away any more. Then I remember getting on the radio and saying listen, can somebody bring some masks, because I need a lot of masks over here.

That was about it. When I turned around and I tried to help these people before the north tower collapsed, the first big collapse, we were helping -- we were at, I think the American Express building. We had people that were burnt. We had people that had fractures and other people with psychological type of problems. We had staged them there, because there was

R. ABRIL

really no control over anything at that point. That's when the north tower collapsed. It was when I heard Mayday, Mayday. Some of the firemen that were running back were telling us run, run, run. We started to run and now that I think about it, some of these people with fractured limbs, they kind of took off running.

That's it. Then after that, we just started to drive and we started to treat these people and I lost my partner. That was it.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add or that you can think of?

A. About the whole thing?

Q. Yes. Personal stuff.

A. At that point, what I didn't understand was why is it that we were triaging people on the first floor of this building that has a plane on top. I couldn't understand that. When I had a chance to walk in to see what was going on, there were actually close to 5 DOAs on the street. Some of them had no legs, some of them that had no arms. There was a torso with one leg, with an EMS jacket on top. I guess somebody wanted to just cover it. There was a fireman that had been hit by a body. I really didn't understand why is it that we were triaging people on the first floor

R. ABRIL

instead of going somewhere else.

What else did we do? Then after that everything came down and we were away from the dust cloud and everything, we were somewhere around, I think it was West 23 Street, somewhere around there. You could still smell the dust and smoke and we just wanted to come back. We kept going back, but at one point it was useless because most of the people that could get out were already walking back and there wasn't too many people other than the regular hysterical people, there was no really injuries.

Other than -- maybe we treated a couple of eyes injuries, cops that were coming out. There was one cop that was actually crying blood. There was blood dripping down from his eyes and later I found out, the doctor explained to me that when you get concrete in your eyes it becomes rock and when you close your eyes, your cornea, your eye is bleeding. So I guess -- we just flushed the eyes and they kept going.

That's pretty much it.

MR. MURAD: Paramedic Abril, I would like to thank you for this interview. The time now is 015 hours. This concludes this interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110464

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT KEVIN BARRETT

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. BARRETT

MR. MURAD: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 0700 hours. My name is Murray Murad of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name?

A. KEVIN BARRETT, shield number 1465.

Q. Your rank?

A. EMT.

Q. What is your assigned command?

A. Battalion 49.

Q. Okay. The location of the interview is being conducted at Battalion 49, Astoria. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Can you just give us what happened that day in your own words?

A. Sure. Came into work, you know. It was a typical day, so it was my wife's birthday. I was going to, you know, I was talking to my partner, deciding what I was going to do for her. Take her out to dinner and stuff like that. Did our little routine, got breakfast, reading the papers and approximately about 9:15, we were told to go to the 59 Street Bridge and stand by and wait for further instructions.

We were told to switch to Citywide and upon

K. BARRETT

listening to Citywide, they came over and confirmed a 1040 at the World Trade Center. 1040 is an airplane crash. We were sitting there waiting for instructions, sitting there with Lieutenant Scaringello and other units that were told to stand by the bridge and approximately about 9:20, 9:25, we were told to respond in to the World Trade Center and stand by at Vesey and West Street.

Upon hearing that we responded in. We followed another unit and we followed ESU truck 4 straight down into Manhattan to the World Trade Center.

Upon listening to Citywide we were told, being we were a HAZMAT unit, we were told to go to a different location. So upon arriving at the area, we told the Lieutenant, who was directing everybody, said we are a HAZMAT unit. He told us to make a right and to be honest with you, I don't remember what the street name was, even looking at the map, it was just so -- I was getting into what we had to do, my assignment.

So we get there. I saw Captain Janice Olszewski. I told her we are a HAZMAT unit, you know. We are here, 49 Henry, and she said okay, you stand by with me. Have your partner get your truck ready and we

K. BARRETT

will use your ambulance as a supply truck if we need anything.

Upon coming down, everything was going good, people being brought down to us, being triaged. I was working with the Captain, Lieutenant Bruce Medjek, and was trying to organize everything a little bit better. I ended up talking to Paramedic Carlos Lillo. He kept asking me where is my wife, have you seen my wife. Have you seen my wife. I said Carlos, don't worry, she is going to be okay. She is around. We will find her. Concentrate on doing what you got to do, do what we are here for.

Upon that, a lot of civilians were coming and trying to answer their questions and the cops asked me do you have any fire line tape or anything that we can block the road off. I said yes, I have HAZMAT tape, so I got the HAZMAT tape out of my truck. I cordoned off the area. So the civilians, all the nosy people wouldn't come in and bother us so we could do our job.

Approximately 9:50, we heard this loud noise. I looked up and it sounded like another airplane was coming in. That's what it sounded. It sounded like a large engine, like you're sitting on the seat on the wing of the plane. That's the best way I



K. BARRETT

can describe what it sounded like.

We look up and we saw tower two coming down. We just all ran. I lost my partner. I lost everybody I was working with that day. Let me backtrack for a second.

When we were putting up this HAZMAT tape, I turned around and I said to Carlos' partner, Paramedic Abril, I said where is Carlos. I mean -- by that time Carlos was gone. We don't know where he went, but we think he went in to look for his wife. We don't know.

Q. Do you know what tower -- was both towers still up or did he run -- do you know what tower he was heading towards?

A. No. Both towers were still up when we were --

Q. At what point did you actually lose Carlos?

A. I would say maybe roughly about 9:45. Somewhere around there. Just Bobby and I just turned around and he was gone. It was just -- I remember Bobby telling me he gave me his pager, because he has an alpha numeric pager and he said I will call you and let you know where I am. We never heard from him again.

Then like I said, when tower two was coming

K. BARRETT

down, we just all scattered and a young lady was getting trampled on. I picked up her up and I said come on, let's go. We only got up around the corner. She went one way, I went another way. The last thing I remember is it started getting, gray, gray. It turned pitch black and I get up, I turn around, like I couldn't move. I figured out I was underneath a car.

I got up and I was just -- got out from underneath the car and I realized I was underneath a police car, praying how lucky I was.

Q. That's when the south tower came down?

A. That's when tower two came down.

Q. Which is, you are referring to --

A. I guess the south tower.

Q. Okay, because the north tower is still up, right?

A. Right.

Q. It was the south tower that came down. Okay, go ahead.

A. Then I got out. I got out from underneath the car. Made sure I was okay. I didn't see any blood or anything like that on me. There was two gentlemen behind me. I wanted to make sure they were okay. They were okay. I said okay.

K. BARRETT

We walked into a store and we just, you know, got some water, cleaned out some of the stuff out of our throats, because we were all just coughing and gagging and all the stuff that we inhaled and ingested. I asked to make sure they were okay. They were.

We walked into the store and I just started looking at people to make sure everybody was okay. All of a sudden, I hear my name called out and I end up hooking up with my partner again, which was another miracle in itself, because we just ran. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I got into the store and we just -- I saw my partner and I was like you are okay. He was okay. He wasn't hurt either. Then we were going to go back out. We went back out to check to make sure we were going to go back down to the area, make sure everybody was okay, see what we could do and that's when the

K. BARRETT

north tower started coming down.

We ran again. By the time we ran, we just got -- I don't know where we were, what we were doing. We just kept running. After the north tower came down, we were able to find EMT Moussa Diaz, another one of our co-workers out of our station. The three of us just hugged each other. It was like a miracle that we all survived that. It was just something I will never ever forget as long as I live. I was unable to get in touch with my wife, let her know I was alive, get in touch with my parents, anybody. My cellphone was dead. Couldn't make calls out because the towers -- the lines were down.

Finally at about say one o'clock my mother-in-law was able to get in touch with my cellphone. I told her call my wife, call my mom. Let her know I'm okay, I'm alive. I don't know what time I'm coming home at all. I was able to get in touch with my wife about 6:00 that night at my house to let her know I was okay, you know.

It was just a beautiful day turned into a disaster. I felt like I was in a movie at first, when you see everything, you know, typical movie. You would see a movie and everything is like a storm and a

K. BARRETT

tornado and everything just turns gray and pitch black and I'm in the middle of this. It was like I thought it was a dream and then it was reality.

Q. All right. Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview?

A. No. Just that I'm lucky to be here to talk about it.

MR. MURAD: Okay. EMT Barrett, I would like to thank you for allowing us to give this interview. The time now is 709 hours. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110465

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MOUSSA DIAZ

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. DIAZ

MR. MURAD: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 545 hours. My name is Murray MURAD of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. MOUSSA DIAZ, EMT, 3203 for the New York City Fire Department, EMS.

Q. This interview is being conducted at Battalion 49, Astoria station. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. EMT DIAZ, just give us your perspective on what occurred that day.

A. What happened was we had a job, pregnant complications, so I called for back up medics 49 Victor, Tour 2. We brought the patient over to Elmhurst Hospital. Upon getting our ACR signed, Carlos Lillo came running over and told us a plane just hit the tower, you know, let's come up available as soon as possible and head down there.

Got on the radio, we got in the ambulance and got on the radio, and we told them we were going to be responding, so we followed 9 Victor en route to the tower from Elmhurst Hospital in Queens.

Q. Keep going.

A. Elmhurst Hospital in Queens. From there, we

M. DIAZ

drove down to the Midtown Tunnel. Took the Midtown Tunnel. Our destination was Barclay and Vesey. From there me and my partner -- 9 Victor went their way. Me and my partner went towards 1 World Trade Center, where the command post was.

Q. What was your partner's name, who were you working with that day?

A. Paul Adams, shield number 2212. We were directed to go to either Barclay and Vesey, right across the street from the 1 World Trade Center. That's where we met Captain -- I don't know her name. We had our first patient that had about 70 percent degree burns. We assessed her. We transported her to St. Vinny's. We came back from St. Vinny's, back to the same location. The Captain had told me there is a lady with a cardiac condition, so we sat her down on the stretcher.

All of a sudden we heard a big boom and I looked up and the tower started to collapse, so I instructed the patient, I told her make a run for it. From then we all ran. I lost my partner and a big black cloud of debris started coming around the corner from, I believe it's 5 World Trade Center.

Q. When you said you heard a boom, what tower --



M. DIAZ

can you describe which tower --

A. I believe it was tower one, because we were right in front of it. Right between, there is a street. There is like a path. We were against the building. 5 World Trade Center. I believe that was what it was, and 1 World Trade Center. It was directly above it and that's where the command post was.

When we heard the big boom, I looked up and I just saw the building collapsing. My patient was on the stretcher and I unstrapped her and I said make a run for it. We ran around the corner. Everybody just started trampling. I fell on the floor, and that's when a ball of dust started coming in between the blocks of buildings and my visibility was gone for a while. I ran into a pole, couldn't breathe and a cameraman, a guy had a camera I couldn't see and all I saw was a bobbing light. I ran over to the cameraman and he grabbed me and we started feeling for -- things -- things seem, you know -- we were losing air, trying to feel somewhere where we can get in and trying to open car doors and then we felt for a city bus. We opened up the door, went in, I was looking for buttons to turn it on. We turned this bus on and we started taking people inside the bus to get a little refuge,

M. DIAZ

because there was no visibility.

From there, I thanked him for saving my life and stepped off the bus. Everybody else stepped off and we started running. Then another cloud came. We had some visibility and I had some sense of direction where I'm running towards. I ran towards -- I believe it was Federal Plaza. By the courts. I took refuge there here, by the Federal Building, the US Post Office. We ran up towards this way. We took refuge there. I got the fire hydrant that was open and I got some water to clear my face and stuff. We had like a little command post. People running up to me. I was by myself and asked me what should I do. I just had them sit down, because there was asthmatics, there was pregnant people, nothing really major.

From there, I went back because my partner was gone. I went back, I walked back and I walked back down West towards the location of the command post, but it was impossible because there was no visibility towards that area. That's when I saw EMT Barrett running out and EMT Monchery running out. They were from my Battalion. They were all dusted up and we just, you know, started hugging each other and stuff.

From there, I believe one of them had a

M. DIAZ

radio, because I lost my equipment and everything. We heard that people needed help down at -- I think it was down Broadway and -- I'm not too sure. Couple of blocks over.

We went there and there was an ambulance. The Captain that was in charge of the command area was there and an ambulance. I don't know the people's names. We drove to a corner, because there was somebody in distress like two blocks down. It was just a guy that was in our situation, but he was stable and started to go on his way.

From there, they drove me to the West Side Highway to get checked out. I got triaged over there, mini triage, and I stayed there until the duration, until 1 in the morning basically.

The rest of the people from Battalion 49 that were there, we all went under the ambulances and we went down back to the station.

Q. Just a couple of questions. Actually, so you were there when the north tower collapsed. Was the south tower down already?

A. No, I was there -- I don't know which the first tower that went down.

Q. You were there for the first -- so that was

M. DIAZ

the south tower that came down?

A. Probably, yes.

Q. Then you were there for the north tower, also, collapse?

A. Yes, I was there.

Q. Radio, did you have any radio communications?

A. I lost my radio when I got tr -- because when I was on the stretcher, I had the patient on the stretcher. I unstrapped her and I told her run. I unstrapped her and I told her to run and the people just started trampling on you. My helmet was gone because I didn't have it strapped on tight enough. My radio, my equipment that was on the scene was gone. My ambulance was parked a block and a half away and if I would have went there I wouldn't have made it. If I would have went towards the ambulance I definitely would have -- I was about a block and a half way away from --

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to add at this time?

A. Not at all.

MR. MURAD: Time now is 0600 hours. This concludes the interview. I would like to thank EMT DIAZ for this interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110470

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JOHN HEER

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. HEER

MR. DUN: Today is January 18, 2002. The time now is 8 o'clock. My name is Richard Dun. I'm working for the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. John Heer, I'm an EMT, Battalion 22, Staten Island.

Q. Okay. On September 11 can you just in your own words describe what happened on that day?

A. From around -- we left the station around 8:40. Around 8:45, we started getting calls, I started heading over towards the Verrazano Bridge for staging. They wouldn't send the job over, so we started heading down there, wondering what it was.

Before we got to the Verrazano Bridge, they said to set up the staging on the Brooklyn side of the Verrazano Bridge. Before we got over to the Brooklyn side of the bridge, they said they changed staging also to the opening at the Battery Tunnel. At this time I got a cellphone call from my wife telling me a plane hit the towers.

So I started trying to fix the PD radio, so we could listen to PD, see what was going on over

J. HEER

there, because I told them we were going in and we knew we were gonna be in the Battery Tunnel at that time, me and my partner John Rothman. By the time we got to -- we were just about to head into the tunnel, saw the smoke coming out of the one tower. I was looking down playing with the radio. I looked up and saw another explosion come out of the second tower. I didn't actually see the second plane hit. That's when we went down into the tunnel.

We came out the other side. We were on, what's that, West Street, and we were directed to make a right. We pushed right up into staging up on West and Liberty, where you actually felt the heat from the building. There was a bunch of crushed cars, bunches of just other stuff laying around on the street. Cops directing people, in and around. We stood there for a little while so I could grab some equipment, stand out, I was like the first --

Q. Was there a lot of debris falling still at that time?

A. Yes, we should not have been there. We knew we should not have been there, but there was some Lieutenant, Captain, whoever was there, telling everybody to hang out, that's where we are setting up

J. HEER

staging. Line up the units. Fine, so we stood there. That was like one time I grabbed the helmet and actually stuck it on. There was stuff. You heard it. I don't know if you remember as a kid you used to melt Army soldiers and they go ssst-pop. You hear that sound. That's what was coming off the building.

So after, I don't know, 10, 15 minutes, I don't remember the time, somebody said to us, you know, we really should not be here, you know, this is actually bad. There is stuff falling all over the --

Q. Was that an officer?

A. This is a Lieutenant. Lieutenant or Captain. It was an EMS Fire Department officer, yes. But he was definitely EMS. He said we should -- he was in a little bit of a panic, which is understandable. So we moved down around by South End. We moved up Liberty Street to South End. Just went around the corner and parked the bus there. This time we opened up the bus, we figured let's get the stretchers set up, and basically throw all we could on the stretcher. Long board, pulled the stretcher out and left it there.

There was a liquor store over there. The guy says anything you guys need, come inside, use the phone, the bathroom while this is all going on. I



J. HEER

thought -- and the guy in the deli next door to him says look, can I close yet. I want to go home. I was like, well, do whatever you want to do, I don't care. So this time we started watching people jumping out of the building. My partner counted about 20. I saw maybe like 5 or 6, something like that. Still the same thing. Watching stuff hit the ground. Trying to listen to the radio.

Another unit pulled up. Some guy pulled up to us. He had a cut on his head, so a private unit gave him to us. Says here, we're gonna transfer him to you, or he can sit in my bus and do nothing if you want to. I'm not going anywhere right now for a while. Hatzolah was pulled in front of us. They had a lady having an anxiety attack, so we took our guy with the scratch on his head, and told them to take him too -- because our plan initially was let's go in and grab some patients and get out of there, because this is going to be nuts. So I wound up doing the right thing for some strange reason. That's -- I guess when we just started hearing the tower come down.

Q. Did you see any EMS officers that you recognized at the scene?

A. No, there was nobody there I recognized

J. HEER

whatsoever. We were around a bunch of, as I said, there was -- Hatzolah was there, there was some other privates. There were a few EMS officers. Nobody I knew. At one point a Firefighter came over to us, asked us for a sheet to cover up a body part that was on the street. I'm sure he had -- that was before the tower came down, so -- and that's bad.

Q. The tower was still up though?

A. The tower was still up. You could see when we were around the corner you could see the top of the south tower. You could see the top. It just starts -- you hear the crumbling, like an engine roar and something started coming down like that and people just started scattering up the corner. People just started coming up to us panicking and stuff, so we put them in. We didn't start putting people into the liquor store where the guy wanted us. We started putting everybody into the deli where the guy didn't want us. He wanted to close up. But he was really nice once we all got inside. So we started pushing people in there, grabbing anybody, because the cloud started coming, standing by the door. This time I dropped my radio.

Q. Was there good communication on the radio --

A. It was anarchy on the radio. I'm sorry. We

J. HEER

started hearing stuff -- the first time I ever really heard somebody screaming Mayday, which was for real. Everybody started screaming Mayday, Mayday, over and over again. I just was trying to hold the radio while we were running over the building, putting people in. You couldn't hear anything because people were screaming at us. So we are pushing them in the deli. I dropped the radio. Ran in, you know, it's taboo to lose a radio.

So anyway I ran back outside to get the radio while my partner starts screaming at me. Forget that. Went back inside. I think the deli guy was pretty much anything you guys want? We are trying to push people in the back, through the door. All this time, all you can see out of the window, it was just black. Everything was pitch black so we started -- we are going to get trapped in here. We are not getting out, we didn't know what was going on. Pushed people to the back of the store. My partner started saying like, there is no way out of here. I just like started telling him there is always a way of out of these places. They have to have by law some back entrance.

That's when we got everybody settled to the back where the cold cut racks was and stuff like that.

J. HEER

It still was completely black and some lady came out from the back door and said there is a hotel out back and there are people trapped up there. Me and John Rothman were the only ones in uniform that looked like anybody. Everybody else was civilians, so everyone is coming up to us and at this point we thought we were dead. We weren't getting out of there. I have kids, so I wasn't going to sit and die sitting in the deli.

I went in to the other building, went in through some back door and was went up some stairs and started screaming at the, you know, see if there's people. Started hearing some little voices in the background and stuff. So I was with John, and once again, he started screaming you opening those freaking doors? You don't know what's in there, feel the handle. That's kinda something you learn on TV.

So it was a family, a few families, all cuddled in a corner on, like on the second story. They said it was a hotel, I have no idea what it was. They were lying there. I was like you know, come on down this way. We got a deli down here, you can get water, whatever you need. We are all going to hang out down there and see what's going on. So I pulled them down. I guess there was -- because, I guess, I don't know,

J. HEER

between 8 or 12 of them. I really don't remember.

That's when I found a back door that -- thinking there is a way out. So I pull the door open because (inaudible) and see it was just the cloud came back in so I slammed that door shut.

By this time out front, it started clearing up a little bit so we realized we were not blocked and we can actually get out. It was -- so some Lieutenant or somebody. I don't know who it was. I don't remember. I knew it was an officer, said we was going to start putting people down in the basement. I'm like --

Q. EMS?

A. FDNY I think. So we're gonna start putting people in the basement. I said everybody get off the floor, we are going to the basement for safety, because we didn't know what was going on. We didn't know if another plane was going to hit, if a bomb was going off. Some people go down. Other people are like look, I'm not going to the basement. I said look, I don't care. If you don't really want to go in there I'm not gonna tie you down and pull you down there. I have enough stuff to do here.

Went outside. It was like that, a snow

J. HEER

storm. It was like muffled -- it was a muffled kind of -- like when the snow is really heavy and you are just seeing shapes moving out there, hearing Scott packs. This is where I split up with my partner, John Rothman, for a while.

Actually, before I split, sorry, I'm jumping the story here a little bit. He gave me a potholder with citrus seltzer water on it, because that's all that was in the deli. Hold this over your face, so we could breathe.

Went outside. John Rothman says, hey, I found Chief Grant. So it was like all right. Where is he. He says walking around, he's a little AMS right now. He is over in the other deli. There was another deli down the street a little bit. Here I grabbed the O-2 pack and went down and hooked him up to some O-2. So I'm saying to Chief Grant -- I really don't know him because I just transferred out of here. He says you know, are you all right. He is like just staring with a glazed look in his eyes, which is understandable.

Once again, my partner, John Rothman, takes off out of this store to look around for something. Chief Grant takes the non-rebreather and unhooks it from the O-2 tank. Just walks out with a

J. HEER

non-rebreather on his face. He was like all right, he is all right. He is going to walk around a little bit, fine. Go walk around. I packed up my stuff. I started to find John. I said let's get the unit and get out of here. You know, it was moving down the street. I don't know how far we can go. You can't see anything down here. I don't want to start running over people.

So the truck is obviously covered with all kinds of crap and the stretcher and everything was out. I told him let's throw the stretcher in, you don't know if we'll need it. We threw the stretcher back in the bus, closed the doors up. This time the Lieutenant, I think he said Lieutenant, I don't know his name. This is the same guy before that told us -- we told him we were going to move around. We tell him we are heading down here. So, you know, we told him get in the bus, we are going to drive down the street.

We winded up getting in the bus --

Q. Is this still before the second collapse?

A. This is before the second collapse. We drove up to Albany Street, which is the next street, made a right, went heading down towards the water where there

J. HEER

is like a little circle statue or something there. We hung out there. We got out, this time some guy came up to us, his radius-ulna was broke. We splinted it up. Let's get out of here, but we did the fastest splint job possible, and I said look, don't move your arm too much. He was a security guard or something. We wasn't a uniform status. There was some kind of uniform he had on. So I said don't move too much. Let's get out of here.

By this time, jumping ahead a little bit. We went down, left the bus there, turned it off. Went down to the water, made a left. Started heading down towards Battery Park. That's where everybody was going, because the cloud was all coming up from this way. We are still kind of getting some air so you could breathe, because you couldn't breathe. We got down to a certain point. There were boats pulling up.

Actually before the boats pulled up, sorry, there was a Chinese restaurant or something there, and somebody opened the door and there was about a 4 foot wall there that was -- I don't know how you are supposed to get into this restaurant, because that's the way we climbed over the wall and we started looking over and there were some firefighters, started pulling



J. HEER

them up, because they were down by us. Families, little kids and stuff like that. Little kids started asking me, you know, why is this happening. I was like I don't know, I don't know what to tell you. You be with your family. It wasn't even her family. It was some guy was just, people were helping her out.

Pulled them all into this restaurant. That's when some boats started pulling up along, I don't know what pier that is over there. I have no --

Q. Glen Cove?

A. No, we were down here, all the way towards this plaza, then there is something up here, over here --

Q. The Waterway piers?

A. Oh, okay. There were wood rafters. Boats pulled up there and they hacked open the gates with axes. So we started loading more people. Told them, just get on a boat and get the hell out of here. We didn't know what was going on here. We are going to get hit again.

Before we even got into the Chinese restaurant, that's when the second tower started coming down. That's why I say, my story jumps around a little bit.

J. HEER

But the second tower, which is actually the first tower, tower one came down. We just heard a rumble and the smoke started coming around and people started running. I was like I wonder what they are running for, I can't even see anything any more, and so they took off. I slowed down by old ladies and stuff. You feel bad, you are racing and running past like 70 year-old ladies walking with canes. I said, you can't do that. As I said, we didn't think we were making it out anyway so we just ended up doing the right thing.

Started loading people on to the boats. We had another officer with a broken tib-fib fracture or something. She was splinted up with cardboard or something like that. We carried her over to the boat with -- I don't know if it was Hatzolah or some other private units. They are like are you getting on the boat with her. I'm like no, but if you guys want to go, go ahead, so the privates hopped on with her and they got out of there. Because I didn't even know where my partner was, again. He was not there again.

By this time, another 15 or so minutes, my cellphone started working again for a split second, you know, you heard that happen. Called my wife. She was like is everything all right. Yes. So she decided

J. HEER

this was the time [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

We started packing up, some -- I don't remember what Captain it was. His face is familiar. I'm really bad with names and he was around on a golf cart over there. He said, look, we're bugging out of here. We are moving out. We are heading down to the Battery Tunnel. I'm sorry, not Battery Tunnel, Battery Park. They are setting up staging over there. I'm like cool. So I said, yo, John, there's nothing for us to do over here. You can't see anything. There is nothing going back up there, because you couldn't see anything.

So we're gonna start heading back down there. We are like, all right. We will do that. Let's go around and see if we can get the unit. We go back around up -- we walked back up to get the unit, because we were useless, just walking around, when all our equipment and everything is up there. This time all our windows were busted out. All our equipment was gone. All of our personal shit was gone, except for actually this mug, because I had to save my sci-fi coffee mug. So I'm walking around with this coffee

J. HEER

mug.

We get down to Battery Tunnel. I start walking down there -- and a de-fib. I had this mug and the de-fib. We came to a clearing, there was like a clearing, and there was a Lieutenant there. Once again I don't know the names. John would probably know who he was. He always does. The Lieutenant saw us walking down, he starts running up to us. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. He ran up to us, he said are you guys all right. He grabbed our equipment and carried it for us. I thought that was the coolest thing that you could do at that time.

He gave us some water and we hung out over by a rail for I don't know how long. Then we just started listening to the radio, Coast Guard coming up. There are jets flying overhead now. Every sound you hear, everybody is panicking and running everywhere.

Q. Both buildings are down?

A. Both buildings are down. If anybody screamed, or anybody ran in a little hurry in any direction, everybody was just following them. It didn't matter what was going on. Long story short, I

J. HEER

guess. Finally get to the ferry.

Q. South Ferry now?

A. Yes, South Ferry. Not much really in between, pretty much hanging out, talking about stuff. Trying to get a sense of humor about the situation. Some people already moving around in those little carts.

We went out for long boards for a little bit, to -- the only place that had long boards at that time was Bellevue. A bunch of their own employees were just sitting there staring at us, and we're like, to hell with that. We are going over there. So we took a bunch of long boards. Headed back downtown. Hung out there for a while. Listened to the President's address. You know, that was really inspiring. Somebody put it over the PA system, one of the bosses.

After a long story, we finally said it's 11 o'clock at night, we're heading back to the Island, we're not really doing anything. It's only some walking wounded. Got to Staten Island, we didn't know how we were getting back to the station, so a bunch of firefighters, actually rescue 5, there was 2 firefighters. They were the only two that survived, were on the boat with us and we were all really quiet.

J. HEER

It was a morbid ferry ride back.

We hopped on a train. I didn't know where else to go. We hopped on a train. We got off at New Dorp. We called them up, called the station for somebody to pick us up. At this time I didn't know what was going on in the outside world besides what was going on in Manhattan. They were like yeah, we will send somebody down to New Dorp to pick you up. Get off the train there at New Dorp. All right. We get off the train. Nobody shows up. We call them, they are like oh yes, we are still waiting for somebody to show up. I'm like fine.

Then one car pops by. He says you guys need a ride anywhere. I didn't realize we are all covered in this shit still. Some little kids are asking us all about this. It's what you see on TV. That's pretty much what it is. That's the extent what was going on. Another car pulled up, so we're like no, no, we are still waiting for a ride. Finally, the third, fourth car pulls up and asks us let me drive you anywhere you guys want. My family is here. Giving us their story. They wanted to hear -- there was nothing really to tell them.

Anyway some gentleman did pick us up in a 4

J. HEER

by 4. Drove us back to the station here. Then I left,  
went home. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I went downstairs  
and turned on the TV and that was the first time I saw  
it all. It's screwed up. That's about it.

MR. DUN: This concludes the interview with  
John. It is 8:15 a.m. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110478

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC PHILLIP ASHBY

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason



P. ASHBY

MR. McCOURT: Today's date is January 22, 2002. My name is Tom McCourt from the New York City Fire Department. Currently I'm interviewing Paramedic Phillip Ashby from Division 1.

Q. Can you just identify yourself please?

A. Paramedic Phillip Ashby, Division 1.

Medication coordinator.

Q. Paramedic Ashby, can you tell me the events that transpired from your perspective on September 11, 2001?

A. Okay. At approximately -- it appears to be between 814 hours and 830 hours I responded from Queens to lower Manhattan for a plane into the World Trade Center. I got there --

Q. Who were you working with?

A. Myself. I parked my vehicle on what appears to be from this map, Broadway between Dey Street and Fulton Street. I ran down Fulton Street, where I immediately met the -- what I think was the first triage staging area for that operation.

I met the now Captain Olszewski, Lieutenant D'Avila. Who else was there? Bill Melarango, Lieutenant Bill Melarango, and a number of EMS personnel. We were doing triage in that area, in front

P. ASHBY

of the Millennium Hotel, actually at the corner of  
Fulton and Church.

We were doing triage, treating a number of  
patients. It's hard to count now, maybe, I guess  
probably say altogether maybe 40, 50 patients. Just  
triaging.

Q. What were you seeing?

A. Seeing a lot of burns, couple of sucking  
chest wounds. Just mostly burns, multiple burns. At  
that time I really didn't see anybody jumping out the  
building, although I heard people that have seen that.  
I didn't see any, because I was too busy working. I  
was looking up actually, because there was nothing for  
me in front of me to see when I looked up.

While there I couldn't quantify the time, to  
tell you exactly how long, but I heard a large scream.  
Then I heard a couple more screams simultaneously.

Q. People screaming?

A. People screaming, and I just ran. I didn't  
look around. I didn't -- I just ran because you have  
been around these buildings as long as I have, you  
recognize a real screams from a fake scream and you  
realize something that if somebody is screaming that  
hard, it's something coming out of the lower abdomen

P. ASHBY

that you just can't fake. It's just scared to death.  
I just took off.

Q. Which way did you run?

A. I ran up Fulton Street, stayed close to what would be considered the south side if you will, on the right-hand side of Fulton Street, if you are going east on the right-hand side of Fulton Street, next to the Millennium. That's when I turned around and I saw the building collapsing.

Q. You saw it collapsing?

A. Right. Well, about 3 strides until I run I actually turned around to see what I was actually running from after the fact. Not trying to get -- stop, making sure that I wasn't running from nothing at all, that I was running from something. I looked up and I saw the building lean over and that's all I saw. I just turned back around and tried to run even faster, but I stopped because where I was running to, the plume of smoke had already engulfed Broadway going north.

Q. So you were running into it or --

A. I was running towards Broadway, but it made no sense because it's like a wave, like water going down a canyon. That plume of smoke was just already coming down Broadway. I just, you know, said just -- I

P. ASHBY

stopped. I looked and I said that wouldn't make much sense. I'm going to run into what I'm trying to run from. I turned around and the plume of smoke just as high as this building was, coming at me from the corner of Church and Fulton.

Q. Behind you?

A. Right, just coming around the corner of Church and Fulton. So I just -- I tried to run into the building. To the right I think was a bank or something, right on the corner there. I'm not too sure. But the doors were locked, so I really tried to go to the left a bit. By that time it got so dark and I was so overcome by the soot and the pulverized rock, that I just laid next to the subway station, which would be right here. Right there is the subway station.

Q. Where is that, indicate it?

A. On Fulton and in the middle of -- about a third of the way up Fulton if you are coming from Church on the left-hand side.

Q. Heading towards Broadway?

A. Heading towards Broadway. I stopped by the subway station. Not wanting to go down in the train station, because I realized that if I was going to die,

P. ASHBY

I wanted to die above ground as opposed to being trapped and suffering and knowing that I was going to die anyway. I wanted it to be quick. I didn't want to go down to the subway station and wait to die down there, because I really did think that I was going to die. There was no two ways about it. I couldn't see anything.

          About two or three minutes of sucking in what I would consider to be -- when you think about, it would be something like throwing in your mouth powder and just trying to breathe as somebody throws powder in your mouth. That's essentially what it felt like to me. I mean there was no way you can salivate enough to get rid of it. It just kept on coming down.

Q. Was there anybody with you or you were all by yourself?

A. By myself. By myself.

Q. No other civilians around --

A. No. As I'm laying there ready to die, I can't see anything now because of my eyes -- somebody pulled me and they pulled me up. I guess someone just came out of the Millennium Hotel or even the bank across the street and he is feeling his way, but he is in a better position than I was, obviously, because he

P. ASHBY

was not in the initial plume of smoke. He pulled me up on to Broadway and right between -- on Broadway between Ann and Fulton Street. Right (inaudible) or something like that over there on the corner. He pulled me into there.

That's when I was able to get some water and dust myself off and all that good stuff and really just consider myself fortunate. Just hacking up the dust for like an hour, two hours later -- I mean, you know, soot the color of this table here, which is cherry oak, cherry wood, for like an hour and a half. Actually more the color of that. More the color of that. A cross between these two. But whatever pulverized rock looks like, you know, I was coughing it up for about an hour and a half.

Q. Was there any debris field there also or was it just all of the soot and the dust and everything? Was there actual building material that came down?

A. By me, no. Well, let's put it like this. If there was I couldn't see it. I don't know if there was or there wasn't. But if there was I couldn't see it. All I know is that that was the only thing that was in my lungs. I know that I was limping after the fact, but the reason I was limping was not because anything



P. ASHBY

So I thought somebody launched a missile from the East River, or over the Hudson to knock it down. I mean that's what I'm thinking. If they are, if they are still out there to launch another missile, I got to get the hell out of there, because we were in a war zone right, exactly. I didn't think -- I didn't go and try to figure out my high school physics or my college chemistry to figure out, you know, the fire and the brick and the melting and the boiling point.

Q. Going back to when you were coming, did you see the building on fire, could you see the state of the building while you were responding?

A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes, it was something that was -- it was just -- (inaudible).

Q. You knew going in, you knew what you were going in for.

A. Yes. I knew. Put it like this. I wish I knew what I was going into. I saw what was happening, but it didn't compare to what I was going into when I was there. You know, the devastation was just something that being on the job for 13 years and like I said, being in the last bombing and being in train disasters and everything disasters, nothing could compare to what happened that day. Nothing. Nothing.



P. ASHBY

I hope nothing else, in my lifetime anyway, comes across like that either.

Q. By the time of the second collapse, were you still there?

A. By the time of the second collapse, I was at Pace. Right, I was at Pace.

Q. Pace University?

A. Pace University. I'm trying to get out of there again and as I'm trying to walk towards, not the Brooklyn Bridge, because I figured that would be another historic location for them to attack or launch a missile. I was trying to head towards the Manhattan Bridge and take my chances there. So I was at Pace and then -- actually I was walking towards the bridge when another building came down and I ran into Pace.

Because by now, you know, you don't need anybody to tell you what is happening. You know either -- I don't know if the second building came down, but I knew something with the same magnitude happened as happened with the first building that I saw. I ran into Pace and, you know, people were crying and everything else. I was just trying to just suck wind. You know, I went into (inaudible).

I was just bent over and trying to -- where

P. ASHBY

they keep the food warm, just trying to get at least some semblance of air into my lungs, which was already congested from all the soot. Just bend over with that refrigeration device under my nose, you know, because at that time I was just trying to get any kind of air I possibly can, because I knew that, you know, just from a physiology standpoint, everything was so thick with gook. They don't do lung transplants. So I kind of figured whatever I can do to help, it was on my own.

When that scenario calmed down and a lot of the plume of smoke went away, I came out of Pace, again, still not knowing that the building collapsed, thinking that somebody launched a missile and trying to get out from -- and I came over the Manhattan Bridge and came back here --

Q. To MetroTech?

A. MetroTech. Got treated at BHS. Then I went back, because that's the only way I felt that I could bring some kind of closure, because now I was fully briefed on what happened.

Q. You knew what happened.

A. I knew what happened. There was no doubt and I didn't think that going home would be the place for me to actually bring closure than coming back and

P. ASHBY

actually helping with the rescue or whatever it is, anything that I could do, would somehow bring me, being able to talk to somebody who was actually there. Not somebody who wasn't there. That's not what helped me, because unless you were there, you just can't imagine it.

That's what happened. I went back to the location. I spent another couple of hours late at night and then I went home. I came back the next day.

Q. How is your leg?

A. After three or four days it's fine. I mean I knew I was hurting. I figured, you know, listen, all in all there is nothing to complain about. Nothing to complain about. I'm walking. I stopped coughing up the soot that was in my lungs. Everything else is like I said, is a plus. I wasn't hanging out dangling.

Q. Anything you want to add that you might have glanced over?

A. Nothing. I mean the picture of me in Newsweek. There is a picture of me in Newsweek. That's it. A picture of me and Carlos.

Q. Carlos?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know where Carlos --

P. ASHBY

A. Didn't you see the picture? That's me bending over treating a woman.

Q. You were with Carlos right before --

A. Well, that's what the picture said. Did I see Carlos and know Carlos ran into the building, I can't say any of those things.

Q. You weren't focused --

A. Right, right. He wouldn't have to go into the building to have died in there. He could have died right there in that corner. It was not extraordinary to die. You can die right there in that corner. That picture, you know, placed him -- photographing the woman who I had taken off that chair. She just looked bad, and I put her on the curb, but she just looked bad. I mean she was not --

Q. Is she the one that was all bloodied up?

A. Exactly. I saw a picture of her actually in Time Magazine on the curb where I put her. That's if she's alive. I don't know if she is even alive today.

Q. You don't know her name?

A. I don't know her name. All I knew is I took her off that chair, I put her on the curb because that chair needed some real work, because she was not as bad as she looked. She was frail.

P. ASHBY

Q. Is that when you were doing the triage --

A. Right. Exactly right. That's where we were all doing the triage on that corner. Then I think Lois, who was a coordinator for Brooklyn, said that Ricardo Quinn's wife said that his hand was in that picture, because she recognized his bracelet. I don't know. She asked me did I see him, I said I don't know. I couldn't tell you who I saw. All I saw were the people screaming at me, which was Olszewski, because, you know, they were telling me that listen, you worry about patient care, you worry about triage. As a medic, you get involved in patient care, not triage. They ought to be giving you triage.

That's what I was involved in. So that's about it.

Q. Okay. Is that it? Anything else you want to add?

A. That's it.

MR. McCOURT: The time is 8:40. The interview started at 8:25. This concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110479

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT PETER ROSIE

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

P. ROSIE

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 22, 2002.

I'm Paul Radenberg, Fire Department World Trade Center tasks Task Force currently at EMS Battalion 13. The time is now 13 hundred hours.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Peter Rosie, EMT, Battalion 13.

Q. This interview is being conducted regarding the events of the morning of September 11, 2001.

Peter, you can begin.

A. My girlfriend woke me up and told me to turn on the TV. I live on Second Avenue and 9 Street. I saw that one of the towers was on fire, so I went up to my roof. Figured I would just get in the way, didn't want to go, you know. Then I saw the second bird hit, so then I knew I better get busy. Threw on my uniform, jumped on my son's bike and went directly to Bellevue. I was there like in 3 minutes.

They threw a radio at me and I was on 06 Ida with a partner. I didn't know the guy. Jagoda. His name is Jagoda.

We took off directly from there and headed down Second Avenue. I remember passing my apartment. Got on to Canal and then shot down Broadway and ended up at City Hall Park. That's when we had patients

P. ROSIE

coming towards us. I had no idea that the tower had come down at that time. I thought the debris and everything that I saw, you know, was from the fire. So I didn't have any visual of the tower coming down, but apparently it was coming down, because we got there at around 10 o'clock.

Then with all those patients coming at us, I was trying to triage like 5 people at the same time. 3 police officers, two female officers, I didn't know what was wrong with them. They were pretty hysterical. A male police officer with a cardiac condition and a male with his arm badly lacerated. He was bleeding pretty bad.

So I patched him up and there was a couple of other units there. We volunteered to take these patients on and I'm trying to see -- so I get them on the bus, you know, and start giving O2 to the cardiac condition. Everyone was pretty hysterical and I didn't get the story because I heard collapse, but I would never imagine that the whole tower came down. I just figured well, things had -- obviously -- would fall from the tower and that's how this guy got this trauma to his arm and he was going into shock. I tried to calm down the police officers as best as I can.



P. ROSIE

One of the female police officers just jumped on the stretcher, so I was holding on to the guy with the -- he was my main concern. He had the cardiac condition. I gave him O2. There wasn't much I could do other than that, take his blood pressure and monitor him, but I was concerned with this guy's arm, because it was barely attached.

So we shot to Bellevue and when they opened up the doors to Bellevue, just an army of people in scrubs. They were just terrific, you know, grabbing people left and right, triaging them, sending them to their respective areas. Went back to the station, hosed down the bus because it was a mess with the debris and BBP, as best as we could, restocked O2 and then shot back down.

Then I believe we got to Church Street and during this time -- I mean I have thought about it, you know, during this time, when we first -- that first time, when the first -- when the tower went down, I had no idea and we were off the site before I got any details, so I figured the second tower had collapsed as we were returning back to Bellevue with this person -- load of patients.

Then the second tower had collapsed by the

P. ROSIE

time we arrived at Church Street and Barclay. I remember, because I believe this is World Trade Center 7. This is tower 7 here?

Q. That's the Post Office. 7 is -- yes.

A. 7. So it was right here, Barclay. There was much more debris.

Q. Barclay and West?

A. Barclay and West, yes. It was just dead quiet. At that time there was pretty much -- out of control was -- everyone was just trying to get their bearings at that time, you know. So the Lieutenants I did run into, he tried to get everyone around and take names. That's the best thing we would could do is just get a good idea of who you had with you right there.

But then we had -- there was an individual down there who seemed like he was just like wandering around and so I went and got him and he just -- he was out of it. He had breathed in a lot of the dust and -- I guess he was an EMT, but he was kind of like on his own type of thing. He had his kit bag, you know, and his badge, but more or less, you know, he got out of there. He was pretty much out of it.

Q. That was down by Vesey?

A. Vesey and West. So we transported him. We

P. ROSIE

transported him to Beth Israel. Hosed down the bus again and made our way back to tower 7. We were here, then we were on this street. What is this? We were on Murray Street and --

Q. Let me get my other map.

A. Greenwich. Murray Street and Greenwich. Murray Street and Greenwich. The World Trade Center 7 had collapsed at that point. I can remember asking, because we had visuals before we left and then I had asked somebody, who was it, is it going to collapse and they said probably tomorrow. But on our return it had gone down too.

At that point we made our way to the staging area, you know, and became the -- what do you call us, we were the unit next to the -- what is the trailer where they take --

Q. The MERV?

A. The MERV. We were the hot something.

Q. Okay. The hot unit.

A. The hot unit, right. We were just transporting firemen back and forth all day. That was it.

Q. Okay. When you got up to the Bellevue station, do you remember about what time you got there?

P. ROSIE

A. You mean the first time?

Q. Yes, yes. You left your apartment and went to Bellevue.

A. I was at Bellevue at 9:40.

Q. Okay. When you came down over by City Hall Park, you had said that there were some other units there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember --

A. I believe.

Q. -- who they were?

A. I believe it was a Presbyterian unit.

Q. Cornell?

A. That's it, and a Hatzolah unit.

Q. Okay. The fellow with the arm injury, he was a civilian?

A. Yes. I actually got his picture in Time magazine. Not Time, but People magazine. It was funny, because I went to Barnes and Noble. I don't mean to get off track here, but it was pretty amazing to see my picture in there and the guy who I transported. If anything, during that -- if I think I made a difference, it was maybe that first run, you know. I'm sure I made a difference all day, but that

P. ROSIE

guy, he was pretty beat up.

Q. So from City Hall Park you went back up to Bellevue?

A. Bellevue.

Q. You came back on the next trip, your next trip in, and you were on like West and Barclay?

A. West and Barclay and then we were -- West and Barclay and we might have -- West and Barclay, not Barclay. Sorry. I was wrong. That's too close, because this was up in flames. Okay. So it was Murray Street.

Q. Murray Street?

A. Murray and Barclay. No. Murray and -- what was this again?

Q. This is Greenwich.

A. Murray and Greenwich, and from there everyone was trying to get their bearings, trying to figure out. At this point we didn't know where the staging area was, the main staging area.

Q. Right. The EMT that you were talking about that was by himself with the tech bag, was he a Fire Department employee?

A. No, I believe he was private, because he had that type of private badge, you know, the blue, the

P. ROSIE

fancy blue one, looks like a detective. He just had a bag full of collars and I wouldn't take him for city.

Q. When you got up here --

A. Oh, when I got here, then I ran into my partner Jason Charles. I believe you are going to have an interview with him.

Q. Yes.

A. I looked and I saw a fireman and -- but it was Jason wearing a fireman's jacket. Have you spoken with him?

Q. I haven't.

A. I saw him and I was really happy to see him, you know.

Q. He is on our list.

A. Yes, I saw him. He has quite a story to tell. I saw him and he gave me some aspirin, because breathing all this stuff I got a pounding headache, you know.

Q. Do you remember who else was down in this area of Greenwich and Murray from EMS or the Fire Department?

A. A Lieutenant Murphy.

Q. EMS Lieutenant?

A. Yes. Lieutenant Murphy.

P. ROSIE

Q. Would you know where he is stationed or ever see him before?

A. No, no. I remember his name, because later on that night, it must have been 2:30, he grabbed me and he said that he had 8 New Jersey busses, bright shiny busses from New Jersey. We are in the staging area and he wants them at Battalion 4. You know, with the lights and the road block and all this shit that's going on, I'm like okay, let me get my partner. He is driving. No -- forget it, you take them. So like, I remember, what is your name sir? Because here I'm with 8 busses and I've got to get them to Battalion 4.

I mean I live down there, but getting through this maze. So I was pretty stressed out by then, because I'm thinking I'm responsible for all these. I'm on my own in this bus and to get them to 4. Please let me find -- I was looking for Canal. Not Canal, Houston. I found Houston. I knew what to do from there and I got those busses at 4. I'm like here you go, thank you.

Now what do I do. Do I go back to Bellevue. Do I go back to the staging area and try to find my partner. So I said shit, just go back to where I came from. Just getting back was a bit of a challenge, you

P. ROSIE

know. On my own I think, like I'm listening to the radio and trying to get the big picture of what really occurred. It was weird because I didn't really have the full story, you know what I mean.

I got back and I found him. Once again we were -- then for the rest of the night we were there. I'm glad I got my partner back, because he would have wondered where the hell is my partner. He would have been stuck down there. I'm just glad that I was given that task and I completed the task and I got back and I found my partner and that was good.

I know you are more interested about what the occurrences at around 11 o'clock. So, sorry.

Q. No problem. No problem. Aside from Lieutenant Murphy, when you say your partner, you are talking about Jagoda?

A. Jagoda. He is Battalion 8. He is Bellevue.

Q. Anybody else down in that area that you remember seeing?

A. Around 11 o'clock?

Q. Yes. Well, when you were back here at Greenwich and Murray?

A. No.

Q. He was the only one?



P. ROSIE

A. He was the only one.

Q. How about?

A. Jason Charles is the only one that I recognized and that was -- I don't know what time that was. That was like on my third return back from transporting. I saw him you know. I couldn't give you any names. Really there wasn't that many EMS, you know. Hatzolah. I saw a couple of Hatzolah units and a New York Cornell, but I didn't see much Fire Department EMS.

I think because -- I believe there were mainly a lot more around the staging area, weren't there? You probably have a lot more knowledge than I do.

Q. Yes.

A. Compared to -- because we came in from this direction, at a fairly late period, you know. I think. So much I'm sure had gone on before all this from the time that the first bird hit and people were trying to get organized and here we are whizzing down just before it collapses, you know, from this direction. Didn't see much activity here, you know. Except for the Hatzolah and the Cornell.

Then it was so good to get to the staging

P. ROSIE

area eventually and see more EMS and ambulance --  
what's going on.

Q. Right, right.

A. I was like, I was trying to do ACRs on all  
these people, do you know what I mean? I was like  
damn. There was -- you couldn't talk on the radio.

Q. The radios were down or just too much?

A. Too much traffic. I figured and I'm sure my  
partner figured, if you don't have anything really  
important to say, don't say it.

Q. Okay. Anything from that morning that sticks  
in your head particularly or any comment you would like  
to add?

A. On a personal note?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, I was in the British Army for six years  
and I had two tours in northern Ireland. I had been  
familiar with explosions going on in Belfast. I was an  
NCO. It was weird because I thought I had left all  
that behind me. That was something that kind of no one  
knows about. There is no way you could really explain  
it to anyone unless you were actually there, you know.

Then this -- it's really horrifying over  
there, because it's not that big and it's more

P. ROSIE

intimate. There is a lot more to deal with. There is a lot more you can deal with compared to something like this. Then for this shit to happen, it was like kind of odd like -- I think I was a little bit more -- I was prepared. I was pretty focused. I stayed focused.

But it was strange because I was still not really awake. I jumped on my son's bike and got on that unit. Here's your partner. Here's your radio. Boom. We are going down and it was weird because we had such a clear avenue of approach. The police were just waving us on and we were shooting down there and seeing everyone come the opposite direction, so it was very surreal. It was like what's going on. It was like let's get there you know.

It was actually a good feeling, you know, that traffic control was so good. That people were being -- people were leaving the area and we did have a good avenue of approach. We were able to get there at a good speed. So it was good. We got there and I'm sure that first load of people, the police officers and the guy were happy to see us. I was just pretty proud of everyone you know.

So that's it.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Time is now 1320

hours. The interview is concluded.

File No. 9110480

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT MELVIN RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is January 22nd, 2002. The time is 2212 hours. This is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department, World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, title, shield number and assigned command area of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

EMT RODRIGUEZ: My name is Melvin Rodriguez. My badge number is 2267. I'm an EMT for the Fire Department, and my unit was 15 David tour 2 that day.

Q. Melvin, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. In your own words could you please tell me the details of the day?

A. The details of the day were I was supposed to go home at 7. Somebody banged in sick. I had to work overtime. I worked the unit called 15 David. We had a job. We took somebody to Our Lady of Mercy. I noticed there was something wrong when I got to the hospital and

there was nobody in the emergency room, because everybody was in front of the TVs in the emergency room outside in the lobby.

Somebody in the emergency room said your lieutenant, Angel Avila wants to speak to you. I picked up the phone, and he says, "What the heck are you doing? I need you -- you've got to be 63 to the World Trade Center. A plane hit the World Trade Center."

So we got our patient signed for by the nurse, and we went down to the Henry Hudson Parkway and went all the way down to Manhattan.

Q. When you were driving on the parkway, could you see the Trade Center at all?

A. I wasn't driving; my partner was driving. I was teching that day. As we pulled up to Manhattan, they told us to switch to the Manhattan frequency because we were on citywide. As we pulled up, we heard a lot of screaming on the radio. Somebody was calling, "Mayday! Mayday! The first one just went down."

We were down by Stuyvesant High School. There was a lot of dust. Everybody was picking up injured people covered in white soot. We had

a fireman -- there was a walking wounded facility across the street by Stuyvesant High School and we had a fireman that was covered in soot, screaming. He opened his eyes and you couldn't even see his eyeballs because he was so covered in so much soot. We took him to the walking wounded. We rolled him up. There was a ramp there, an elevator. We took him up there.

We went back down to our bus, and the lieutenants had us stay by Stuyvesant High School.

Q. When you say "we," who are you referring to? Your partner for the day?

A. My partner was Dwight Scott.

Q. Dwight Scott?

A. He was here in the 15th Battalion.

Yes. That's his regular unit.

Q. That's his regular unit?

A. Yes.

Q. When you arrived on the scene initially, can you just indicate on the map that I provided for you approximately where you parked your vehicle?

A. We were on the west side. It might

have been Barclay or Murray. It was around there, by Vesey, pretty close there, or maybe Barclay might have been it. I'm not sure of the street. It might have been Barclay; Barclay, Murray or Vesey. It might have been -- I think it was Barclay, yes, because it was right by the Stuyvesant -- wherever the Stuyvesant High School is, it was across the street from the Stuyvesant High School.

Q. Okay. Could you just indicate with a number 1 approximately where you think you parked the vehicle?

A. I think I was parked around here.

Q. Thank you.

So now you arrived and this firefighter --

A. We arrived. We got this firefighter. We wheeled him upstairs. They had a gym up there. It wasn't Stuyvesant High School; it was on the other side of the West Side Highway.

We took him up there, and other people in the medical role took care of him. We went back downstairs, and everybody was trying to use the phones to call home and say they were okay.



It was like a line there. All the phones were down. Communications were down.

We had no idea it was two planes. We had no idea it was terrorism. There was no communication. We just knew there was one plane. There was still One World Trade Center building standing, and it was on fire.

When we finished with the fireman, we were around Barclay or Murray. They might have made us move back. There was a gas scare. I don't remember the time frame, but everybody started saying keep your ambulances away from manhole covers and sewers. Somebody yelled, "Everybody run for lives. There's a gas main leak. There might be an explosion."

I got separated from my partner because everybody was running. An ambulance went by with broken windows and the back doors open. I jumped in the back of that ambulance. We ended up going by the Chelsea Piers.

I really don't remember if that was when the second one came down, because to be honest with you it was so chaotic. I just remember little bits and pieces of that day. I

don't remember everything in a sequence.

I remember the second one coming down, and we just stood there in shock. We were like, oh, my God. Everybody said, oh, my God. We had no idea this was going to happen, because we didn't know there were two planes. Me and my partner didn't; I don't know about everybody else.

There was no communications. I didn't find out there were two planes and this was a terrorist act until 18 hours later when I got home and I put the TV on and my wife -- because I called my wife as we pulled into the World Trade Center. I told her what happened. I love you, a plane hit -- she put the TV on, and then she found out it was two planes. After calling her, she saw the second one. She saw them coming down. So they thought I was killed.

So when I got home, she was crying, and we hugged each other. I finally took a shower because I had all this white stuff over me. I put the TV on and I realized, oh, my God, this is terrorism. We're at war. I thought this was an accident.

There was no communications. Everybody was so busy running around. A lot of us didn't know what was going on. That's why they say, oh, they were stupid, nobody should have been there, they should have known. Nobody knew nothing. We were just busy trying to help people. I didn't know it was two planes. To be perfectly honest with you, we still would have helped them, because it's only natural to want to help people.

That was the devastating thing about this. When the second one went down, we went in. You're expecting hundreds of people to be injured. You're going to help people. It was a dead silence. Everybody was dead. There was nothing but body parts all over the place. It was a helpless feeling. You're all pumped up to save the world, and there's nobody to be saved. Everybody's dead.

That's really what the shocking part about all of this was. The dead silence, the helplessness, the frustration, even guilt of being a survivor. You knew when you saw that second one come down all those people and the firefighters and everybody was dying. You

couldn't do nothing. You were helpless. That's what really hits you.

After the second one went down, they said there was an ambulance and the lieutenants were telling us not to go in. I remember telling my partner, "Listen, this is bullshit" -- excuse my language -- "We've got people in there trapped. We're going in there."

So six guys. I said, "Anybody got any balls, get in the back of my bus." There was supposed to be an ambulance called 19 something, and nobody heard from them. They were supposed to be behind the apartments over there by Battery Park.

So six guys jumped in my ambulance and said we're going in, we're going to call this operation our guys. We're going to get our guys out of there. We went in there, we found the ambulance, but there was nobody in the ambulance. Hopefully they got out.

Then we came back. You wanted to do something, and you couldn't do nothing. Everybody was dead. It was just a helpless feeling. It was just a helpless feeling.

I just kept on working overtime down there. I worked the morgue 18 hours my next pass day. In the beginning when you worked the morgue, it was a tent by the American Express building. We, the EMS people, we had to go through the body parts.

You know, you get a body bag in and expect a body. There were no bodies. They were bags. We had to open up those red bags with our hands. Of course we had gloves on. And you had to go through those body parts, looking for anything to associate that remains with a member of the service, whether it was looking for a little blue thread, a piece of equipment. I did that for 18 hours, you know, and it was rough.

I remember the respect the coroner showed by ordering tables. They didn't want to be putting body parts on the floor, treating anybody with disrespect. That's something I remember, the respect they showed for the remains of all those people.

It was just a horrible situation. I don't know how else to describe it. It's just been a horrible situation. [REDACTED]

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Q. [REDACTED]

A. [REDACTED]

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Q [REDACTED]

A. [REDACTED]

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■

It was just a horrible situation. I don't know how else to describe it. It was like living through hell. It was a sad, sad day. I don't know how else to describe it for you.

Q. I think you've done a pretty good job.

A. I thought I had seen a lot of horrible things in my life. In 13 years in the Bronx, I've seen the worst of everything as far as mutilizations, picking up body parts on a highway, 200 pieces, a guy run over by a tractor-trailer.

But working at the morgue and picking up hands with wedding bands on them, knowing that they belonged to some loved one and picking up torsos, wallets with pictures of kids. Those were Americans, you know, decent people who died innocently. It was pretty tough.

It's also brought the good out in people, and I think people are closer to God and people are -- I think we got too -- in this country we got too comfortable where we were so bored with our being -- having a balanced budget and living so good that we were so bored we

started fighting amongst each other: Your color is different than mine. Let me start with you. Or your religion is different. And this woke us up a little bit.

People say we got caught with our pants down. We got caught without our pants even on. You know what I mean?

I don't know how else to say it. It was just a horrible thing. But it brought a lot of good out of people. More people are going to Church now. I appreciate everything I have now, things I didn't appreciate: coming home and seeing my dogs in the yard and them licking me and seeing my five-year-old son. All the things I took for granted then I don't take for granted anymore.

I don't know what else to say. I just hope all those people that passed away are happy in heaven and at peace with themselves. I don't know what else to say.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview in regards to 9/11 up till about maybe 2:00 in the afternoon?

A. Up till 2:00 in the afternoon? It's

hard to get things in sequence because of the severity of the situation. It's like a horror movie you saw in, not slow motion, but fast speed. Your adrenaline was flowing. Sometimes bits and pieces come to you that you don't even remember. I'm like, oh, I remember that now, because your mind blocked out some of the things that were so horrible.

I remember when I was a kid I used to get the paper with the little drops of candy and you would bite the candy. I remember in the morgue picking up a face, just a piece of skin with teeth on it like that. The things you saw down there were horrifying.

Thank God now they don't have to do that. I remember the three people I worked with the first time I worked in the morgue, they had to be relieved. They couldn't take it. So I was there all by myself. I just tried to think these are families, people that were loved and they were good, decent people and somebody has to do this. If I could do it and show respect for their remains and treat them in a respectful way, I'm going to do it. That's the least I could do

for these people, besides pray for them.

I remember the priest saying prayers over them before we even opened the bags. Everybody that died in the World Trade Center, their remains were treated with respect. They had a priest pray for them, for their last rites, for their souls, that they didn't suffer.

And I think the families that don't know that should know that, that there was nobody who had a family member's remains treated disrespectfully, without prayer, without respect, and I think that's very important that the families should know.

If I could do something, I would want that to be known, that the families know that we treated their family's remains as though they were our own families, from the coroners who ordered those metal beds so nobody would be put on the floor to the priest there that prayed over the remains.

I think if there's one thing I could tell the people of New York is that their family members' remains were treated with respect and dignity. Maybe that will bring them some solace

in this whole sad situation.

That's all I can say.

Q. I thank you very much for conducting this interview.

MR. ECCLESTON: This interview is being concluded at 2230 hours. The counter on the cassette player is 484

File No. 9110482

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMS LIEUTENANT NELSON VELAZQUEZ

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

N. VELAZQUEZ

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 23rd, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force currently at EMS Battalion 14. I am conducting an interview with Lieutenant --

LIEUTENANT VELAZQUEZ: Velzaquez, Nelson, from Battalion 14 in the Bronx, Shield No. 372.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is being conducted regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Interview start time will be 1308.

Q. Lieutenant?

A. On September the 10th, I worked the Tour 3, evening tour, in the Bronx. I proceeded to stay on for Tour 1, which is September the 11th, the night tour. I worked a double shift. Sometime around between 5:00 and 6:00 o'clock in the morning, when I arrived home, this was probably about the time when I went to sleep, and during the morning of September the 11th, I thought I was dreaming when I was hearing sirens and a lot of noise and commotion. The location where I was sleeping at my girlfriend's house has a view of the West Side Highway and West End Avenue on the lower east side, 62nd Street. My girlfriend turned on the News Channel 1 and she woke me up and told me that an airplane just crashed into the World Trade Center. So when I woke



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up, I looked out the window and I could see what looked like hundreds of fire, police and different types of emergency vehicles heading south. It looked like there was no other traffic on the highway or on West End Avenue going south. There was a lot of commotion on the street and this is far north of the actual event.

So I immediately put on the same clothes I worked on the double and I ran downstairs and I got on my motorcycle and I went in my personal vehicle and I rode down to near Warren Street where there's a College of Insurance and that's where I parked my bike, in the middle of the block between West and Warren going -- I don't know the name of the street that's eastbound.

Q. That's Greenwich.

A. Greenwich, between Greenwich and West, and I started walking south on West when a cloud of smoke started to come in my direction. I believe the first building collapsed probably by the time I was parking my bike on Warren. As I started to go west -- I mean south on West, I started encountering a lot of people running in my direction. Some of the people I recognized as fire and police and mostly civilians. I noticed that the smoke started to settle and it was basically a stream of dust, and I remember grabbing one

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EMS person and stopping her from running because she seemed kind of dazed and lost and I noticed there were vehicles in the cloud and I held her and I said, hey, it's already collapsed, you don't have to run anymore, and she was like frantic, like don't go over there. She was terrified. So there was an ambulance and a crew that was covered in dust and I just led her to them and they proceeded to deal with her, I guess. I told them to do anything just to keep her occupied, but I didn't want her to run any direction.

As the cloud started to settle, I went south, and there was like an overpass, a pedestrian walk, close to a building that was on fire. Apparently from the time I left my house to the time I got down there and parked my bike, a second aircraft had crashed and the first building had collapsed. There were people everywhere. It was total chaos. There was equipment all over the place. Basically, there were units coming in from a lot of different directions, private and EMS, and what I was trying to do, I met up with -- I somehow found an EMT by the name of -- now I can't remember, from Jacobi, Battalion 20, Fuentes I believe his name was or Flores. I can't remember.

Anyway, between me and this EMT and a couple

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of vehicles, we tried to set up like a staging on West up against the sidewalk. Eventually, because of the dust, we had to move north about two blocks, and before we knew it I had about seven units and about twelve people. There were mismatch units, civilian, FDNY units. The communications was impossible. There was a lot of radio chatter and poor reception. So basically I had these units that we were already treating people. We didn't even get a chance to make ACRs. We must have treated about 30 people with respiratory problems and eye irritation. We tried to have them standing into the wind so that the wind could give them some fresh air.

A few minutes after, then the next building came down. I didn't expect it to come down. It was a total shock. It was a very terrifying feeling. There were people crying, people were dazed. I didn't run when the second building fell because there were still too many people, and I didn't have any of the people move the vehicles because I was afraid they might run people over. So it's kind of stand fast, and the smoke and the dust came by like a wave, and then we started trying to regroup again. We stayed there for a couple of hours, we treated a few people, then we wound up

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moving north into the gym of the -- I think it was the medical college or Bronx -- Borough of Manhattan Community College, the gym on the second floor, and we started treating patients, we put out the mats, we started trying to dust people off before they came into the building, and we were treating quite a few people there. I noticed there were a few Bronx units from Lincoln. I remember Mr. Perez. I remember seeing Burgos covered in ash. They assisted me for a few minutes. Then there was a call to evacuate the school gym because somebody said there may have been a gas leak. By then we were already set up with school security staff. We set up hoses to hose people down just before we had to evacuate the building and we moved about another block north. Most of the vehicles, including the MERV, I remember, were south of Vesey or near Vesey.

During this chaos, there was a water truck, a Poland Springs water truck that was down there, and me and a couple people managed to go down there and take about ten bottles of water and we brought it to where we were at the staging we set up north of Warren, closer to the college gym, and we were irrigating people's eyes. Most of the people just wanted to

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leave. A couple of units transported a few patients.

We stayed there for a couple of hours, just gathering every unit that passed by me, I stopped them to see if they had a purpose or where they were going. Most of them didn't know where they were going. They were just coming in from all over the place. I held them for a while, monitored the radio, and they would ask for a unit. Apparently there was another staging southeast of me. I'm not exactly too sure. I think it was on Church. They were asking for units and I sent a few units in that direction. Once I saw that the units were not being utilized where I was, I sent them to the pier on, I believe it was 23rd Street Pier.

Q. The Chelsea Piers?

A. The Chelsea Piers seemed to be like an assembly area. So I sent quite a few units over there because they were not being utilized. But the period of time that we were at West Street near the college we had a treatment center and there was also a staging.

After those units were sent north to the Chelsea Piers, I went south, where the command post was. Apparently I stayed there for a few hours assisting any way that I can. I believe there was a school, a public school they were using as maybe a

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command post, and there were a few units there and I was directed to control those units and supervise them for a little while. It seemed like the sun was already starting to go down. I was supposed to go back to work at 1300 hours on the 11th for my Tour 3, which I never made. I wound up staying down in Manhattan for the rest of the tour until there were quite a few resources. I remember seeing a few chiefs.

Anyway, then from there I went home and that was basically my tour. My evening tour I stayed down there instead of my battalion.

Q. You parked your bike here on Warren, right, between West and Greenwich?

A. Well, I can't see the name of the street on the map.

Q. This is Greenwich.

A. Yes.

Q. And you said you had started coming down south on West?

A. On West.

Q. And you had said that you encountered the female EMT that was out of it --

A. Without a partner or a vehicle.

Q. -- and another ambulance crew that you put

N. VELAZQUEZ

her over with them?

A. Right.

Q. Do you remember where that was?

A. Roughly, I think it was near Barclay.

Q. Down around Barclay?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you recognize the crew at all?

A. I remember the female. I don't know her name, but I think she was from -- actually, I think she used to work in Jacobi. I think she works out of Bellevue now.

Q. That was an EMS crew member?

A. An EMS person.

Q. You continued south, roughly this first covered bridge?

A. Right where the bridge was.

Q. Between 3 and 6 Trade Center?

A. It looks like it's on the northbound side of West by 6 World Trade Center.

Q. And that's where you tried to form up a staging area?

A. Well, that's where I was encountering a few more people, but the scene wasn't safe. There was still a lot of smoke and dust and I believe these

N. VELAZQUEZ

adjacent buildings were on fire and there was still a lot of emergency vehicles coming in these areas and they were sort of blocked in. So we went up towards Barclay.

Q. So you were basically taking units that were already in this area --

A. They were coming from every direction.

Q. -- and brought them back towards Barclay.

Do you remember seeing any other EMS officers down there that you recognized?

A. Not initially. After the second building collapsed, a while after, and before -- I'm not sure if it was -- was that 7 that collapsed, the third building?

Q. I think so. That came down late. Well, not late, but like 5:00 o'clock in the evening the same day.

A. Right. Well, I remember when that one came down, I was at the command post that was I guess between Vesey and Barclay and there were quite a few supervisors and chiefs and a lot of fire suppression personnel. But most of my activities were a little bit north of that command post because we had to move several times.



N. VELAZQUEZ

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. No.

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. Thank you. The time  
is now 1323 and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110483

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT NAOMI NACIONAL

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 23rd, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 14 in the Bronx, conducting an interview with --

EMT NACIONAL: Naomi Nacional, EMT 5228 shield.

MR. RADENBERG: Naomi is currently assigned to EMS Battalion 14. This interview start time will be 1417 hours, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Naomi.

A. I was outside Bronx Lebanon Hospital on the concourse when I heard on the radio station first before the announcement went over the radio saying that a plane crashed into the twin towers. At first I thought it was a joke because the radio station does a lot of things like that in the morning. My partner was like, "Oh, my God, listen to this, what happened."

Before we knew it, we heard the announcement over the radio. In a few minutes they assigned us, which is very strange, I

thought, because we were all the way in the Bronx, which is just kind of weird. We didn't hear them calling anyone else.

They called our unit, 14 Charlie, and we started heading down there. I was working with Julio Marrero. We took Second Avenue all the way down. I remember driving towards there and I remember seeing all the smoke. As we got closer, I just see the towers, and it looked kind of scary and stuff.

We actually got a call that was on a corner, not actually responding to the MCI. It was for a cardiac on the corner. I'm pretty sure it was something along the lines of Liberty and Trinity, that section over there. But we had a call.

I remember when we got there there was just so much chaos and commotion. There was no way we can find a person with a cardiac condition on the corner. It was just impossible. So we tried to explain this to the dispatcher. Them not knowing what was going on, they were just telling us, well, then come back to the Bronx.

We saw a lieutenant on the scene, and

we pulled up to, I would say Vesey and West. It was not in front of the towers on the left side but somewhere adjacent to where you could look and you saw them right on top of you.

We pulled up on the scene, and there were all kinds of people, fire trucks and everything. We saw the building on fire right above us. I stood in the bus, and the lieutenant on the scene was informing us where to go.

My partner got out of the vehicle and was speaking to the lieutenant, and I was trying to speak to the dispatcher, because she was telling us to come back to the Bronx. I was telling her that the lieutenant on the scene was telling us to come out and help out.

All of a sudden I heard this noise that was just horrible. I would say it sounded like a gate rattling or something like that. I look over at the people, and I go to look up. But I was sitting inside the ambulance, so not realizing that there's no way I could see. I saw nothing, but I heard it. Then I looked back, and I saw that almost everyone was gone. It was just like in a second I looked and no one was there.

So I got out, and I started running, because everyone started running. That was when the second tower collapsed. It was right at the beginning of the second towers collapse.

We were running, and I got completely separated from my partner. I didn't really know where to run. All of a sudden it was like a beige snowstorm. All these people were running and asking for help. I didn't know what to do. I didn't have any equipment. I didn't have a helmet. I had nothing. I remember that the stuff was burning my skin because I had short sleeves on because it was still warm then.

I leaned up against the wall and I covered my head, and all the dust and debris engulfed everybody. This one guy, he was a big guy. He was about your size. He jumped on me for me to help him. I didn't know what to do. I think he broke his leg or something because his leg looked all weird.

There was no way I could help him, because I'm not that big in comparison to him. For him to jump on me for me to try to try to carry him away from there was just not happening.

I remember I fell to the ground because he jumped on me. I leaned against -- I felt for the wall, and I leaned against it. I couldn't see anything. I don't know why -- I don't know if it was psychological or anything, but I couldn't hear anything. I don't think that I was deaf, but I think I blocked out whatever it was and I couldn't hear anything. I was just trying -- I put my face in my shirt to try to breathe. It was too late. It was all covered up.

Eventually it seemed like a long time, but I don't think it really was. I started realizing what was going on. It was just weird. I got up, and I was walking around and looking for anyone from -- any PD, any fire, fire guys, and I couldn't find anybody. I just found all regular civilians that were running to me.

It was to the point that I was so nervous because I couldn't help them. I wanted to either take the shirt off or doing something, because they were just asking me what to do and I had no clue.

I forgot really what happened. I know

I was in a bank. Somehow I was in a bank. I found my partner there. I walked right up to him, and I tapped him on the shoulder and he was like, "Oh, my God, are you okay? What happened?" I was like, "I don't know."

Then we were getting people into the bank. This woman was having an asthma attack, and we couldn't do nothing because we had no equipment. So I was basically just watching her really suffer.

Then after that I don't know what happened. It was like a lot of gaps and whatever.

I remember when the second tower came down, stuff kind of fell around me. I leaned against a wall, and there was stuff out here, to the right and to the left and in front of me. I stood in there for a while. When I came out, it was like -- I must have been really close to the towers. You didn't realize when you were running or when you were walking if you were going in the direction of the towers or away from it, because all you saw was -- it was a fog.

What I'm thinking, I'm pretty sure I



ran towards the towers instead of away from it, because I saw -- when that one collapsed, I saw less amount of people and more of the people I saw were people that were on the run, not really responding, or stuff like that.

I got out of wherever I was in, and I saw -- when all the debris was flying through the streets, I saw this one guy and he was helping a whole bunch of people. He was in a CVS. I think that was two or three blocks away. I had run a distance. He was helping all these people.

[REDACTED]

I thought it was kind of funny because I saw these firemen and cops running in there, and he was saving them. Some guy from the street that we underestimate, and here he is now like almost a hero, a regular guy.

I was in the CVS. There was a whole

bunch of cops in there and firemen in there. Eventually we got out of there. Somehow I was in a gym. I remember being in a gym where there were actual weights and stuff and people.

I found this one kid that I knew from -- he was in Battalion 46. His name is Chris Londel. He is now I think in a photography unit in Metrotech from when I last heard of him. He helped me out a lot. He gave me his helmet. He looked after me. I never really knew him.

I just saw him once, and we just recognized each other. It was like this unspoken thing that we just wanted to stay near each other, because we knew that we were or whatever.

We went around trying to help out people. We took -- it was weird, stuff like bananas and tried giving them to people so they wouldn't get nervous. I don't know what we were thinking. It was kind of strange. I was sticking with him.

I found this other guy. His name is Charles. I don't remember what his last name is. Or maybe that's his last name. I just remember Charles. He's from Battalion 16. I saw this

other guy, Carlton Smith. He's from 46 or 50 or something like.

It was just a crazy thing. I saw all the firemen, and they were all having this look on their face that they didn't even have to think about it. They just had to do whatever they thought was right and they didn't even know if it was right, just like complete look of doubt and belief at the same time.

As far as the towers, I don't really remember looking at them after that because you couldn't see anything. I just remember when I actually did turn around it was kind of stupid to me. I kept thinking to myself I always see in horror movies the girl will be running and turn around. Why does she turn around? What is she looking at? Keep running. I turned around and looked, and I thought why did I do that?

That's basically what I remember. Eventually I kept walking towards the highway, and I found a lieutenant. Supposedly she said that I was real out of it. It was just basically I was real tired. I wasn't hysterical or anything. I never really cried from the whole

thing. Fortunately I didn't lose any immediate family members and so forth.

Q. When they gave you the job for Liberty and Trinity, the cardiac, when you were coming -- when you were heading downtown, did you reach Liberty and Trinity?

A. Yeah, we reached it at some point, and then we -- I don't know if we turned around, because all the streets were completely like -- you couldn't even tell. There was just private ambulances, all kinds of fire trucks.

Q. Jammed up?

A. Yeah. I remember being at the point and saying there's no way we can find anybody. There was just mobs and mobs and mobs of people. There was no way we were going to get out and look for somebody. It was obvious we had to either find a lieutenant and ask them what we should do or whatever.

I remember being there. My partner was driving, so I don't know if he went down and turned around up Trinity and then made a left on Vesey, because I know that we weren't on the left side; I'm pretty sure that we weren't. I think

that's what happened.

Q. Was it at Liberty and Trinity that you found the lieutenant?

A. No, it was somewhere around Vesey that we found the lieutenant.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. No.

Q. Do you remember any other EMS units that were with you at this spot there?

A. Actually we didn't see many EMS units at all in the beginning. When I saw them was all after the buildings had collapsed and they came in. The beginning when we pulled up, I think I saw one. I don't remember what bus it is. From what I heard, I think only two ambulances were really destroyed, and I think one of them was the one I was in.

Q. The unit you went down there?

A. Yeah. It was bus 311. I don't remember any other buses that were there. I remember seeing one command car and one other ambulance.

Q. So you were on roughly Vesey and West. West Side Highway or -- this is actually West

Broadway.

A. I'm pretty sure it was West Broadway.

Q. West Broadway?

A. Yeah, because I don't remember seeing the highway. You know what I mean?

Q. Right, right.

A. I just remember seeing more and more buildings.

Q. So you were over here at Vesey and West Broadway when the first building collapsed?

A. I think so. I'm pretty sure.

Q. Do you remember roughly where you were when the second one collapsed?

A. I don't think I was that far.

Q. You were still in the area?

A. Yeah. I think I was only maybe not that far at all, like maybe Church and Vesey, because I had run, run, run, and then I went back to look for my partner or whatever I was doing with people and stuff. I think I ran the other way.

Q. Kind of back towards it?

A. I think so, yeah.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. I don't know what else to say. I'm just really sorrowful for all the loss, and I'm sorry for all the firemen. I just remember like their faces and stuff. The reason why I have this job is because I wanted to be a fireman since I was a kid. It was just strange. I don't know. As far as the World Trade Center and stuff like that, I don't really know.

Q. That's okay. No problem?

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1432, and the interview is concluded.

File No. 9110484

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC KAREN LAMANNA

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins



MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 23rd, 2002. I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force. The time is now 1448 hours. I am currently at EMS Battalion 14 conducting an interview with --

PARAMEDIC LAMANNA: Karen Lamanna, paramedic out of Battalion 14.

MR. RADENBERG: And your shield number, please?

PARAMEDIC LAMANNA: 1620.

MR. RADENBERG: This interview is regarding the events of the morning of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Karen, if you would give us when you were assigned to the job.

A. In actuality I wasn't supposed to be working then. I was on overtime. I normally work 3 to 11. The day before I had signed up -- I had signed up for overtime originally on tour 1 the day of the 11th or the day of the 12th. But an opening came up for tour 2 in the morning, so I decided I'd take that. I like working tour 2. Anyway, I wasn't supposed to be here. I would

have been home.

Anyway, I came in. I got here about 7:00 in the morning. I was told at that time I was supposed to be riding a paramedic unit, but one of the paramedics didn't make it in. So they decided they were going to put me on a BLS unit, an EMT bus, 14 Mary in lieu of 14 Young, which was my normal unit, which is what I would have been normally working.

So I worked with Freddie Burgos and myself. We went into service, checked our vehicle. We went around the corner for a quick cup of coffee. We had just finished that, literally, and we were heading to our area. We got called on the radio, "14 Mary, switch over to citywide. We'll be sending you a standby." Okay. That was nondescript as much as possible.

The job came over. It came over as a possible explosion -- I think it was a possible explosion. Anyway, MCI at the Empire State Building. That's how we got the job originally. So we immediately switched over to citywide, told them we were 63, which is en route for the job, and off we went, flying like crazy to get there

because we knew that it was going to be something major it was going to be the Empire State Building.

While en route, before going over the Third Avenue Bridge, I was listening to the mate chitchat going on over the radio, the 12th and whatever else was being given. I looked at my partner and I said to him, "You know, this doesn't sound like the Empire State Building; this sounds more like the World Trade Center." Sure enough, 30 seconds later when the job comes over it's the World Trade Center.

At that point they thought possibly a small plane had hit the World Trade Center. They didn't know what tower at that point, or at least we didn't know what tower at that point where we were. So we went, oh, boy, that's going to be something major.

So anyway, we continued on. We headed down the FDR Drive. About halfway down the FDR Drive -- the traffic was getting very heavy. Everything was being shut down. About halfway down, all of a sudden we heard screaming over the radio, "Oh, my God, oh, my God, there's another

explosion, there's another plane." My partner and I looked at each other and went, "Oh, my God, we're in trouble now."

We continued down the FDR, and we got to the point where about a half a mile before the Brooklyn Bridge exit we were stuck in major traffic trying to get through. We were able finally to see the towers. All we saw was a lot of thick smoke, some flames.

We looked at each other and said this can't be happening. We felt like it was in a dream, that it was totally surreal. I'm like, okay, time to wake up now. Time to wake up. Needless to say, we weren't dreaming; we were awake.

Trying to fight our way through the traffic, with the help of the Police Department and all, we managed to get off the exit there for the Brooklyn Bridge, but we went down through the side streets.

I said to my partner, "I'm familiar with Manhattan somewhat, but when you get down onto the little streets like in the Wall Street area, it's like a maze." He said, "No, I pretty

much have an idea where going," because we were looking for the staging area, which at that point one of the staging areas was listed as Liberty and West, if I'm not mistaken. So that's where we were going to go.

We zigzagged along and went through all kinds of streets. Along the way a couple times we got flagged down, the people that were injured and had already made it away from the trade towers. But at that point there were so many private ambulances and volunteers and everything else that we decided, look, they can handle whatever comes their way right now. We need to get to the staging area. We're always told to go to the staging area. So there we went.

So we futzed around. We got lost a little bit here and there. Finally we saw an AMR ambulance, and he was zipping along. It looked like he knew exactly where he was going. We said let's follow him, and we did. He did know where he was going. We ended up coming out onto West Street. I'm not exactly sure where we came out originally, probably around Rector or thereabouts, because I know it stops. West

Street eventually stops and becomes a park somewhere.

So we came in right after -- like if you went from that direction, it would be from the park. Further down would be this street we came out on heading towards the World Trade Center on West Street. I think it was around Rector, but I'm not exactly sure.

We came out there, made a right-hand turn towards the World Trade Center. We went down past the first Marriott, coming from that direction.

Q. Roughly heading north now? Heading back uptown?

A. Right, yes, I was heading towards the World Trade Center. So there's a Marriott, then another building, something called like 72 Post or something like that. Then there was a little street, and then there was a steak house, Morton's steak house. Then there was another building, and right next to that building was I think Liberty, because the first overpass is there. Then on the other side, directly on the other side of that, is the second Marriott that

went down along with the World Trade Center.

Q. Yeah.

A. So when we first got there and pulled into the area, we were just on the other side of that walkway, that first walkway. So we were sitting pretty much in front of the Marriott, the second Marriott, the one that went down with the World Trade Center.

Q. Okay.

A. It was total chaos. When we first pulled up, there was dust and things burning all over the place already. There was just totally a lot of debris. Everybody was running in different directions trying to get equipment and everything else.

I don't remember seeing a lot of civilians at that point. I just remember zoning in on all the emergency personnel. I know that when we first drove up we were running over body parts. That much I remember.

But we decided at that point we needed to find a place to park, somewhat safe and out of the way and in case we needed to get out of there quickly. We needed to get our equipment and get

going towards the major scene.

So I backed up, and I ended up on this little -- it isn't there anymore now. It was like a little island per se. It was made out of cement, and there was some grass on it and things like that, which was right behind -- coming back now, right behind the walkway, the above, overhead walkway.

Q. Right.

A. First we parked there. There were a lot of other ambulances and fire trucks and everything around there. I don't know if you want to call it woman's intuition. I don't know what you want to call it. But I said to my partner, I said, "You know, maybe we should find someplace else to park. Maybe we'll wind up getting stuck in here. We need to maybe pull out a little bit further in case we need to get out of here in a hurry."

So we looked around real quick and we saw a spot that was open at the corner right in front of Morton's steak house right in front of that little street. I don't remember the name of the little street that was right there in front



of Morton's.

He's like, okay, I'll back you up into the spot. So he jumps out of the vehicle. We backed up into the spot. I no sooner throw the vehicle into park, I'm just throwing it into park, and the noise started of the first tower coming down.

It was the most horrendous noise I ever heard in my life, and it's even hard for me to explain now what it sounds like. I know I've heard people describe it as thunderous. I'm sure it was thunderous. It was just many different things.

So I started screaming at Freddie, "Get in the bus." I didn't know what was going on, but get in the bus. "Get in the bus! Get in the bus! Get in the bus!" He jumps in. We start to roll up our windows. Before we know it, it's completely black.

It's not like any darkness I've ever seen as far as at nighttime or anything. You couldn't see anything. There was no daylight. You couldn't see anything out of the windows at all. All we could hear is everything falling on

top of the ambulance, the hood and on top.

I started to panic a little. I'm like, "Oh, my God, what are we going to do? Let's get out of here." Freddie is like this and that, "You just stay calm. Calm yourself down. We'll be all right. Take a few breaths." I started to calm down, somewhat, as much as I could, but got my head together a little bit.

I said, "You know what? I'm going to put it in reverse. I'm going to see how far we can get out of here," because I didn't like the way everything was piling up at the ambulance. I figured any second something was going to come flying through the windshield.

So I did. I put it in reverse. But I really went slow. All I had to really do was lift my foot off in order to move a little bit, because I didn't want to take a chance that somebody even in the darkness was running behind us. Then I really would have felt bad.

So we went as far back as we could, and then we weren't going anywhere else. So obviously I had hit something. So I put it into park, and then we just sat there and held each

other's hands and just waited it out.

The noise finally stopped. It took a little bit, but it started to become daylight. I just remember saying, "Oh, my God, look at this. This is awful." I took a split second to look over to where we had just been parked, and if we hadn't moved the ambulance we probably would have been dead, because there was huge, huge beams and girders and everything else sitting right where we were. I could see there was an ambulance in front of us, somewhere in front of us, that was on fire a little bit ahead. It was just like everything was crushed and mangled and covered with that big white, gray dust.

We decided let's get out, let's get our helmets on. We hadn't even gotten that far yet. Let's get our helmets on, let's get our equipment, and let's get out of here and get to safety and see what we can find as far as patients along the way or whatever.

We no sooner jump out of the ambulance when one of the EMTs that I know from the Bronx drops right in front of me. I'm like, "Oh, my God, Eddie." He was in extreme pain and

everything. I'm like, what happened? He's like -- he doesn't know. He's totally in shock and out of it. He's screaming, "My arm and my back."

At that point I just scooped him up. We ran around to the other side of the ambulance. We sat him on the side of the ambulance for now until we could figure out and get our heads together and get helmets on and everything. He's complaining of his arm and his back. I looked at his arm, and I could see it was obviously broken.

In the meantime as we were doing all this, one of the EMTs from the AMR bus that we followed in came running over. I don't know who it is or was. He came running over and said, "Oh, my God, oh, my God, I can't find my partner. Have you seen my partner?" I'm like, "No. Who is your partner, number one. Number two, we're not even thinking that far yet."

I have one of us in front of me, and we're trying to get our equipment together. Something just happened. We're not exactly sure what happened. We're not seeing it like the people saw it on TV. We just knew there was a

noise -- I mean, we could surmise approximately, but we didn't really know, because we were so close that we still had a lot of buildings in front of us.

So he's freaking out. He's running all over the place. Then another medic from up here in the Bronx, Joe Jefferson, I ran into him. He had been separated from his partner. So he had very little equipment on him. So we took his equipment, what he had.

Mind you, I didn't go out as a medic that day. All I had was a monitor and a tube kit. We took the monitor and the tube kit and what little equipment he had, and I think we had the trauma bag on us too. Yeah, we had the trauma bag. But nothing as far as drug bags or anything like that or anything with syringes. What did we do with the trauma bag? You know what, I don't remember if we had the trauma bag or not.

Anyway, we just threw everything on the stretcher, and we put Eddie in the stair chair. While we were doing this, another I think he was an EMT from Hazollah, a volunteer, came running

over. He had been separated from his crew. We were like a rag tag bunch.

He said, "You know what, I'm going to go over to that building," pointing to I think it was 72 Post or whatever it was called, right next to the Marriott, "I'm going to see if it's safe in there."

By the time I backed up and everything, we were sitting in front of the Marriott pretty much, so it would have been the next building over. So he went running in, and he came back and said it looks safe, as safe as it can be. Who knows. We don't know what's going to happen now, this, that and the other.

So we just grabbed everything we could, grabbed Eddie and wheeled him over. We went into this building and took a really good look at him. It was like there were other people there, civilians and stuff from different places that had run into there, I guess, during the first collapse.

So we took a look at him, and he was really saying, "I'm really having a hard time breathing. I'm really having a hard time

breathing." By this time we were able to do a somewhat more complete assessment on him.

We splinted his arm, and we took a look at his back. He had a huge hole in his back on the right side. We made an occlusive dressing and put that on. He kept saying as time went on, "I'm really having a hard time breathing on the right side."

So Joe and I looked at each other and went, oh, God, this guy is going into pneumothorax and we don't have the equipment here to be able to do anything about this. I'm thinking, Jesus, he's going to die right in front of us and there's nothing much we can do. There's so much we can do when we don't have all --

So at that particular point we had made the decision, all of us, that we were going to move farther up towards the park, towards Battery Park, for two reasons. Number one, we weren't sure if we were completely safe where we were. Two, we had to find an ambulance or something to transport Eddie out of there.

So I took the stretcher full of

equipment. Joe took the stair chair with Eddie Martinez. My partner -- along the way we seemed to manage to find this big barrel, a tub, whatever, full of water. We said we're going to need that, not only for drinking but to irrigate eyes and whatever else.

So he's dragging that. I'm taking the stretcher full of equipment. Joe has the stair chair with Eddie, and off we go. Joe and Eddie were in the front, I was in the middle, and Freddie was in the back. We were all scattered. We were all about a quarter or half a block apart, but they're small blocks down there.

Q. Right.

A. So at one point I left the equipment because I wanted to go back and see how far back Freddie was to help move him along. In case he was having problems, I could deal with that and then we could switch off, so on and so forth.

So I went back and couldn't find him at first. I didn't know where he was. I'm like, all right, he'll catch up, type of thing. I didn't want to leave the equipment too long because the monitor was there. I don't know,



whatever. I'm thinking more about the equipment at that particular moment. So off I went back to the equipment.

I no sooner get back to the equipment and I go no more than five feet, and the noise started again, the second one coming down. Of course I didn't know it at the time, but here it was again.

At that split second -- right after that I look up. Now the stair chair is empty, and Joe and Eddie are gone. I don't know where they went to. In that second they were gone. At that point I look around to see if I can see Freddie again, and all I see is this big mountain of debris and smoke and everything coming towards me. I'm like, screw the equipment, I'm running, and off I go as fast and far away as my legs would take me.

I'm looking for someplace to duck in. I couldn't find anyplace to duck in. There was nothing really there. This stuff is really right next to me. It was really right behind me at this point. I had to make a decision to do something, anything.

All of a sudden out of the corner of my eye I saw a black Jeep with its headlights and brake lights on. I went over really quick, and it's under one of those buildings that cut through from one street to another. So it was only like a little underpass.

Q. Right.

A. I couldn't get in the car, so I just stayed next to it. At that point it was all over me. Everything was on me. I couldn't see, I couldn't hear, I couldn't breathe. This stuff was so thick that I was breathing in I thought, oh, God, I'm going to die. I said, I'm going to die here alone, how nice. That's what was running through my head.

It felt like forever, and every once in a while I would squeak out "Help," just so I could hear another human voice. I'm not hurt per se, but I didn't want to feel like I was totally alone. Of course no one answered me because they couldn't hear me, because I couldn't hear anything and I couldn't see anything.

I don't even know how much time went by. It took a while. It finally started to

dissipate just a bit, and I screamed out "Help" a couple more times, and I finally got an answer. They screamed out, "Where are you?" I'm like, "I don't know. Over here." I didn't know where I was. "Over here." He said, "Follow my voice." I'm like, okay.

I'm searching with my eyes again so I don't bump into anything. It's still pretty dark. I finally bump into him, and he's a firefighter from FDNY. I couldn't tell you who he was, to this day. I wouldn't know him if I tripped over him now. He was there.

Q. Right.

A. He said, "Okay. Follow me," because by that time now it's daylight again. It had dissipated. We just started walking out of there together. It was just a total mess. I mean, the debris -- the level of dust and debris was inches thick like a snowstorm, like three, four, five, six inches deep, whatever it was. Just the debris and fire and everything all over the place and people screaming and yelling and running.

I was having a hard time breathing. I was having a hard time seeing because everything

was in my eyes and in my throat and in my mouth and everything.

We walked a little bit towards the park, and we came across this truck that said FDNY command center. So we figured it was a good enough place to check in to. By this time the radio's going crazy. We couldn't get a word in edge wise, and they couldn't hear me. I tried to go over the air to tell them I lost my partner and whatever.

Not that anybody was really interested, only because they kept saying get off the air everybody, not to me but to everybody, because they wanted to make sure they got the important stuff through.

So we went to the command center and knocked on the door. A firefighter let us in. The first thing I said to them was "Are we safe in here?" He shrugged his shoulders and "I don't know." I said, "Well, that makes me feel so much better."

He was like, "Where are you from?" I said, "I'm from the Bronx. I work out of Battalion 14. I lost my partner, I lost my

vehicle, and what do I do now?" He was like, "Hang out here for now until we figure something out." I kept saying to him, "Well, are we safe in here?" I'm thinking, Jesus, I went through this twice. I can't go through this anymore. He's like, "I don't know." He was honest. He didn't know. I'm like, oh, all right, it still doesn't make me feel any better.

So then about a couple minutes later he said to me, "Well, I hear they're setting up a triage area." I'm like, "Okay, where?" He said, "Over at the Staten Island ferry terminal." Okay, where is that from here? I don't know that. I don't know Manhattan very well. He said, "Up a couple blocks or so into the park, in that area, Battery Park." I'm like, "Okay, just point to me sort of where, and I'll go. I can't stay here."

So he sort of gave me an idea. I said, "Well, thank you very much, and I'll find my way," because I just couldn't stay there. I didn't know what was going to happen, if something else was going to happen. Plus I needed to go where I knew EMS would be as far as

being able to help someone else too and so on and so forth.

Off I went. I got about a block and an ambulance went by. I'm like banging, "Wait, wait, wait, wait for me, wait for me." I'm screaming, like a stupid thing. They finally stopped, and I jumped in the back. There's a doctor and a couple of EMTs. They were off to find a baby with asthma. Where they're going to find this in the midst of all of this, I don't know. I'm like, all right, whatever.

So we ended up going another block or so as far as distance-wise, and we ended up near -- the vehicle stopped, the door opened, and there was Jerry, Jerry -- he's one of the division ALS coordinators -- Bacchus, Jerry Bacchus.

So the door opens, and Jerry Bacchus is standing there. I'm like, "Oh, my God, Jerry, thank God. Thank you. A face I know." It made me feel a little bit better to see somebody that I actually knew, because by this time of course I had been separated from Freddie and all the people I had been earlier. I didn't know where

anybody was.

He jumped in and started pulling things out and whatever. I was having a lot of trouble breathing, so he put me on a nebulizer treatment, because my pump just wasn't doing a thing. I have a little bit of asthma, but it only acts up when I get sick. So I did that.

In the meantime Chief -- a chief was there too. He used to work out of OMA. Now he's over at downtown -- at Gouvener, Battalion 4.

Q. Hirth?

A. Huh?

Q. Hirth?

A. No, not Hirth. He's an older gentleman. He's at OMA. He's a newer -- he just made chief like right before that. He was a captain.

Q. Oh, Steffens?

A. Yes, Chief Steffens. That's it. Thank you. Chief Steffens.

He was there too. I had only known him from just OMA because I went there once. I saw him. He was trying to coordinate things. There were just a few of us here and there. There

weren't a lot of us at all. There was only ten of us, maybe, give or take; a couple of medics, and I think the rest were pretty much BLS.

At that point we started getting a lot of people coming towards us as far as having difficulty breathing and stuff in the eyes and everything, so we started treating for that. Then it was decided we would start putting people on boats and get them out of there.

So we were doing that. We were putting whatever we could on boats and just sending them wherever they were going: Staten Island, Jersey City, Jersey, wherever, just to get them out of there, because we didn't know what was going to happen even next.

While we were doing that I remember hearing a plane flying overhead. I'm thinking, oh, my God, not again, not again. I looked up, we all looked up, and there were F-16s. I was like, oh, my God. We were in trouble then. Okay, that's a first, F-16s flying over New York.

Anyway, we eventually got most of them off onto boats, that came to us, anyway. A lot of firefighters wanted to be treated, and they



went right back to the scene. There was just no way of keeping them out.

I also ended up running into Chief Brown, Bobby Brown. He and the person he was with were just walking aimlessly. I don't know where -- I think they might have been headed for the terminal eventually, but maybe not. Who knows. They were like in shock like the rest of us.

So I explained to him that I was with Chief Steffens over there in this port. There was a big port. I just remember the big port, a big circular port.

So we ended up spending a few hours there. Probably about 1:30, 2:00 in the afternoon some of these cell phones started coming back up again. People were able to get out a couple of calls. So I called my girlfriend and let them -- to let her know that -- she was hysterical. She knew I was down there. She could feel I was down there.

Q. Woman's intuition.

A. So I just told her -- I told her I was okay, I would get back in touch when I could, and

I gave her a few numbers to call to call people, because I didn't want to tie up the lines. That must have been around 2:00 in the afternoon.

Then about an hour later we finally -- all of us moved over because people started -- there wasn't anybody else really coming to us in that particular area anymore. So at that point we picked up and we moved everything over to the ferry terminal, and we spent the rest of the day there.

We didn't have too many people coming. We expected a lot of people. But as you know, there weren't that many people coming out, some rescue workers who had minor injuries, lacerations and things like that. Throughout the day, I had just some difficulty breathing and all. I had to go back on the neb a little bit.

Most of the time it was just sitting there in a trance like almost, just like shock, trying to take this in but not really understanding. We heard little bits and pieces on the radio that was in the ambulance. We found out that the Pentagon had been hit and supposedly they were looking for four other planes or

something. There was a whole big thing that they were going through. So we only knew bits and pieces.

Then around 4:15 or so, 4:30-ish? I don't know. Something like that in the afternoon is when seven went down. We couldn't see the building itself go down, but we saw all the debris and everything kicked up and the smoke kick up again. I went to someone and said what happened? They told me they heard on the radio that seven had just gone down.

So we were there just all day. I didn't get out of there until close to midnight. I didn't know anything about Freddie. For the most part I had been asking people all day. No one had seen or heard from him. Finally I ran into Chief Villani at 4:00 in the afternoon, and I was explaining to him that I was upset, I didn't know how my partner was that I came down with that day and everything.

"Who's your partner?" I told him who he is. "Oh, I saw him." I'm like, "Did you see him before or after the second collapse?" He said, "After the second collapse." I said, okay,

that means he's okay. He was doing the same, he didn't know about me type of thing.

So around midnight -- well, before that they were sending people out little by little. About midnight my turn came up. The problem was I had no vehicle. I had no way of getting back up to the Bronx. So what happened was I got transported to Battalion 4. From there I managed to hitch a ride to Bellevue. From there I hitched a ride to Metropolitan. From there I hitched a ride to Harlem, and from Harlem to Lincoln. I mean, the crews were really nice about it. They went a little bit out of their way, but it was extraordinary circumstances.

Q. Right.

A. So I didn't get back to the station until close to 12:30, quarter to one. I was just covered from head to toe and everything. I was afraid to touch my hair that it would fall apart, because it was so brittle. I ended up -- I had to take off all my clothes and stuff before I went home. I ended up just putting like a hospital thing on. I was like, whatever. I finally got all that done, and I headed on out of

there after 1:00.

By that time I had already spoke with Lieutenant DeSantis. He upset me a little bit during the day because at one point when I finally got -- those were the two phones calls I made. I made one to my girlfriend Lisa and I made one to him at 2:00 in the afternoon.

He gets on the phone and he's like, "Where are you?" I'm like, "I don't know exactly. I think I'm somewhere in Battery Park." I said, "I can't find Freddie. I don't know what's going on. He said, "Well, this is what I want you to do. I want you to find your partner, find your bus, and bring them back up so I can put them out as a line unit."

I'm like, "What? Do you hear me? I don't know where Freddie is. I don't know if he's dead or alive. I don't think I have an ambulance left." I said, "There's no way," and whatever. So I was a little upset about that. He didn't even bother asking me if I was okay.

I spoke to him later in the day. He was apologetic. He's like, "I'm sorry, I hope you're okay." I said, "Have you heard from

Freddie?" He's like, "No." "I'm just telling you right now, I'm letting you know I will not be in tomorrow. I only need one day. I'll be back. I just need one day. I need to get my head together and whatever and maybe do some -- CSID or something."

So the next day I went to CSID. I took the day off. Then I came back on Thursday the 13th. Of course they kept me for overtime, so I worked a double, so on and so forth. Then I went back that weekend, because I wanted to try to get some closure. I got a little bit, but how much you can get? I had to try to make peace with it a little bit. I ended up catching pneumonia, so I was out a little while with that.

It's just funny how your minds works and the things you think about or don't think about. I remember when I jumped out of the vehicle and found Eddie and brought him there but then the bus started to make a funny noise, because all this stuff got sucked into whatever systems.

So I went back to turn it off, and I made sure I turned the battery off. I locked up

the doors. I remembered, oh, my God, my backpack, should I take it? I'm going to take it. I took my backpack. I threw it on my back. I had that on my back all day.

It was just weird how you go through certain motions. The vehicle, as far as I'm concerned, was all locked up in the front. There was a lot of damage to the hood and other places to the vehicle. That was done -- that was between the two collapses. I didn't know what had happened after the second collapse. As far as I knew, we didn't even have a vehicle. Although that thing has nine lives. It came back again. We're not in it anymore. That was enough of 448 for me.

Although I do have one souvenir of that day that I don't leave. You know how they say American Express you shouldn't leave home without it. I have the key to 448. Of course they've changed the locks since then. But this is what I have left of that day to remind me. At least during the first collapse this vehicle saved my life, as far as I'm concerned.

They never made a stink about it, so I

walk around with it everywhere. I know it sounds a little silly but, I don't know, that's how I deal with it.

Q. Whatever works.

A. One last thing. I just feel bad for all the lives that were lost. I knew a couple of people that had just transferred over from EMS to FDNY. I didn't know anyone else per se except by reputation or whatever. It was a great loss, not only FDNY but PD but also, which were always forgotten, EMS we lost ten people, not all within FDNY, but voluntaries, different volunteers, privates, everybody. They're just as much as important as anybody else.

But my hearts go out to their families as well as all the civilians that were lost that day. How odd, I'm looking at a picture of the World Trade Center, I found it. Beautiful picture, though.

But yeah, my heart goes out to them. I thank God every day that I'm here. There's days I wonder why I'm here, why was I spared when others had so many -- I'm not married, don't have any children, but others did. So there are days



I wonder why me, why not somebody else. I guess it just wasn't my time, but sometimes I ask why.

Q. I have one question.

A. Sure.

Q. When you were heading down towards -- actually when you were heading down towards the battery, were you coming down the West Side Highway?

A. No. I was I think going east -- oh, I had come from -- no, I came from the east. So I came off the FDR.

Q. No, after the collapses.

A. Oh, after the collapses.

Q. With Jefferson and --

A. Right.

Q. -- Liberty.

A. Right. We started -- here's Liberty. So we started -- yeah, we were headed towards -- I don't know, is that considered the West Side Highway or is it still considered West Street? I think it's still considered West Street.

Q. Okay.

A. So we would have been walking down West Street towards I guess Battery Park. I guess

that's what it is. I'm not a hundred percent sure still to this day, but I think that's what it is, Battery Park.

Q. Yeah.

A. So we were heading towards Battery Park down West Street.

Q. Did you ever catch up again with Jefferson?

A. Jefferson I didn't see until weeks had gone by. But I had heard that he had suffered minor injuries but that he was okay. Eddie Martinez, it turned out he didn't end up getting a pneumothorax, by some miracle, I don't know how.

He got transferred -- put on one of the boats, not with us but somebody else put him on one of the boats, and he ended up over in Jersey City. He had to get some pins and stuff in his arm, and they had to do surgery to remove a lot of shrapnel out of his back.

He finally started making inquiries. He went looking for me and Joe Jefferson, because he thought we were the ones that found him originally after -- as far as I understand, he

got there just as the second plane hit. So originally his time line was a little confused.

Q. Right.

A. He didn't realize where he ended up afterwards, because he started farther over. As far as I know, he started over near Vesey, I think, up towards Vesey and Church. So he ended up way over from where we were.

I got his number. He left his number with my partner, my actual partner, Dale, and I called him up one day and we talked. We had a nice conversation. He called us his angels. We weren't. We were just there. We took care of him -- I mean, we spoke for quite a while. He thanked me. He wanted to get together some day. He was going up north.

As a matter of fact, I saw him -- we had a Christmas party for the benefit of the two FDNY EMS that we lost Lillo and Quinn. So he was there, and he was doing much better.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Freddie, by the time I got back, he had already left to go home. I didn't actually see him until Thursday. The 13th is when I first saw him the first time. We just went over and like hugged each other with little tears here and there. We both lived through something -- we both lived through the first one together, and the second one we had to do separately. Neither of us -- didn't leave our minds.

I need to go on duty.

MR. RADENBERG: The time is now 1530,  
and this is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110485

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC JOEL PIERCE

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. PIERCE

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Today is January 23rd, 2002. The time is 1416 hours. My name is Christine Bastedenbeck, Lieutenant with the New York City Fire Department. I'm at EMS Battalion 57 conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name, rank, and unit that you're assigned to.

A. Joel Daniel Pierce, paramedic 3927, 35 zebra, Battalion 57.

Q. Joel, were you on duty the morning of September 11th, 2001?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Were you assigned to the World Trade Center?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you tell me about the events of that morning?

A. My partner and I were sitting up by McCarren Park when we heard a signal 1040 go over the air. I didn't know what a 1040 was, so I pulled out my little Ready-Medic book and I looked at it and I told my partner it was an airline incident.

Q. Do you know who your partner was that day?

A. Eric Rodriguez, Paramedic Rodriguez, Shield 2526. So we heard multiple units being assigned

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immediately from Battalion 31 told to switch to Citywide, so I said this has to be pretty big. So I switched over my portable to Citywide and you didn't hear much at the moment until you heard, I believe it was one of the condition bosses in the city screaming on the radio, basically send everything that the city has to offer because it was pretty bad. So I told my partner, who was driving that day, to drive down to the waterfront somewhere by Kent, and I believe we came off of North 12th. As we rounded the turn, we saw the north tower on fire and we were just awestruck by what we saw. We parked the vehicle on Kent, got out, stood there. My partner called his wife. I just stood there staring, and then I watched eventually the second plane, I saw it. It looked like it was circling coming south, then came back north, striking the south side of Tower No. 2. I got pretty sick to the stomach at that point. Eventually, the Brooklyn North dispatcher contacted us and advised us that we were heading to Manhattan at that time, to the World Trade Center.

We headed over the bridge, the Williamsburg Bridge, and my eyes were just fixed on what was coming out of the towers, the smoke. As we got down there, we didn't exactly know where the main triage area was or

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staging area was. There was just so many people running all over the place, and my partner and I, we had no clue as to where we were going. Then we found ourselves over -- we came back around and we were on West Side Highway or West Street by Liberty noticing a bunch of ambulances parked on the west side of West Side Highway next to No. 1 World Financial Center.

So we pulled over, we set our vehicle up underneath the pedestrian walk on Liberty Street between West and I believe it's South End Avenue. We were there for a bit and I just stood there looking up at the two towers and I just watched people jumping. I must have counted about eight people. One of them was on fire as he hit the ground. I thought it was just a piece of burning debris coming down until my partner said that's a person jumping.

I was with some Captain. I don't know where he was from. I said, boss, this is not a good spot to be sitting. I mean, stuff from that far up can easily get caught in the wind and come over towards us. He agreed and we said let's get these vehicle around the corner on South End, and that's where we ended up. My partner drove the vehicle right over here, just around the corner of Liberty. That's where we put the



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vehicle.

Q. Where you made the X on the map?

A. Correct. Multiple vehicles along the side here. I remember seeing the Hatzolah MERV over here. I think that Rescue 2 pulled up over here, multiple Fire units. There were a lot of other units from Metropolitan, FDNY, EMS and other voluntary units pulling up, so they were all lining up and down this road here. The Captain asked me to make sure each unit was not going to block themselves in, at least one person would stay with their unit. I said sure. So I ran up and down, made sure they were setting up their equipment, have their IVs, if they're ALS, start setting up their bags.

As I came back to report to him, I saw that Chief McCracken, Chief Grant, their aides and some other officers were at the corner of Liberty Street and South End Avenue. Chief Grant noticed me, that I was there. I pulled him aside. I advised him what was going on over here and that I was going to head back over onto the West Side Highway over here and advise those guys to get around the corner over here. He said that's a good idea, let's get them off the highway. Just as I started walking back, just before that

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catwalk on the corner, some maybe 20 feet, I guess, 50 feet, I heard this sound.

Q. You were on Liberty Street then?

A. Yes. It was right around here, I guess where the E is on this map. It's around this area, this general vicinity where the group was clustered, McCracken and all the other officers and their aides were. That's when we heard that sound, again, and I swear it sounded like another plane coming in, just that rumbling noise, that steadily -- that continuous rumbling that was getting louder and louder, and I think the last words I had were, oh, God not another one. So we all ran. We got ourselves in this little corner right over here, right by the hexagon here, and we all just kind of cowered underneath this little overhang right up against the lobby windows. There was no place to run.

Q. The lobby windows of World Financial?

A. Financial, yes. The hexagon part.

Q. Okay.

A. There's a little corner right over here, and that's where we basically just crowded together and kept our heads down and the rumbling noise just got immense at that point and I kind of looked up and all I

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saw was this huge dust cloud going right between the two buildings here, between 1 and 2, right where the -- going literally between on Liberty Street, and it was just this huge wall, like this perfect wall of dust. It slammed into Gateway Plaza across the street from us and then it basically rolled right back at us and I said, oh, shit, this is it, here we go.

We were all holding hands with each other. Wherever you found a hand, you grabbed it and you just held on. Unfortunately, I had McCracken's hand and he's got some pretty big hands. He squeezed my hand pretty good. But I think we were all pretty fricking scared at that point. We were all praying quite loudly, too. I'm Jewish and I think I was saying Hail Marys. I was just joining what everybody else was doing. You just didn't know what was going on other than the fact that here was this cloud of dust coming right at you and you you're just convinced that this is it, this is over with, because you don't know what else is coming with it.

So basically I just held my breath and just waited and I just felt that blast of air and dust come right at me. The glass held up. We were pretty amazed about that. I took a breath, started gagging. There's

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a deli right on the side here. There was an open door. All I saw was this door, so I like created a human chain of people and I just led them through this door, this little deli. I said just follow this and follow the building, head south.

I went back, I don't know, I tripped on something, banged my foot and some guy fell on top of me. I picked him up, pulled him away. I came back to where we were and along the side, the westernmost side, It was like I noticed a lot of the glass was still intact, you could see like maybe four or five panes of glass still held up, and then I heard somebody banging on the other side. So I believe it was myself and someone else, we smacked the window out, walked into the lobby area of 1 World Financial Center, yelled inside if anybody was in there, and this guy yelled out, yeah. I said can you see my flashlight? He's like yeah. I said, well, walk into the light. Not exactly the words you want to hear said. But he kind of got to me and I grabbed him and I dragged him over to where the broken window was and said get out through here and go.

I proceeded across the lobby to the other side, closer towards Liberty Street, the northeastern

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corner, just on the other side of the pedestrian bridge crossing the highway, and I walked out. All the glass windows were completely smashed out on the east and north sides of the hexagon part. I walked out, walked around. I was like -- I just didn't say much at all. I was looking at all the burning vehicles. Nothing but burning vehicles outside, all the ambulances.

I walked off into the street area and I think that's where I found Chief Wells, Charlie Wells, who was kind of like crawling in the dust. I yelled out his name. He kind of picked his head up. I ran over to him, picked him up and dragged him over towards the World Financial Center, and I guess that's where the shock of everything really kicked in now because I just looked. I was like where the hell is the tower? Where is everything? Did they both come down? I didn't know. I just stood there and then he had to kind of verbally slap me, not physically, just like, Joel, wake up, wake the fuck up, we need you here, excuse me, we need you here on this, and I kind of snapped to it again.

I walked around, grabbed some helmets, cop helmets that were like laying all over the place, gave them to people who didn't have helmets, looked around,

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see if I could find anybody, see if they needed help. Most people were walking wounded. I think that was it, really. A lot of people were uniforms just totally walking around like they were ghosts. They were like it was just amazing what just happened.

I helped out moving things around, getting people, making sure everything was okay, inspecting some of the ambulances, looking inside, didn't find anybody in none of them. I headed back towards my bus because I realized my partner was missing. We went back there. I found him coming to me and he's like where the hell were you? I was like where the hell were you? He told me that he was -- we went back over to the ambulance and we found it completely covered in dust and debris, the back window was smashed out. It looked like it took a beating, just all this crap that was on it.

He says there's an evacuation in effect; we're getting the hell out of here. I was like, yeah, okay. So he said the vehicle's dead, it's shot, because it was running at the time, so it must have sucked up all that dust and it clogged up the vents and everything. I figured the best thing to do was, because I'm hazmat trained, I'm trained with the SCBAs,

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to grab my air bottle, he grabbed his, we grabbed our face masks, and then this ambulance was pulling away and we jumped in the back of that and we headed down South End, down towards the waterfront, as far as it would go.

Q. At this time only the first tower had collapsed?

A. The first tower had collapsed, correct. That's as far as we know. I mean, you couldn't see anything. It was just such a huge dust cloud, you just didn't see a damn thing, other than you did see some debris and it was like large pieces of building and just nothing but a dust cloud.

So we got down there. There was this church down there. We just kind of like all hung around, we just sat there, and we were like what just happened? I mean, we were just still -- everybody was in awe. More ambulances were showing up from multiple agencies. Again I was tasked with -- because I had no ambulance left. So it's like my partner and I were pretty much useless at the moment unless they actually were going to set up a true triage area. We had no equipment other than our air bottles. This one Lieutenant said go to each ambulance and make sure, if they're ALS, to

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have their lights flashing, and if they're BLS, to have them turned off, and each ALS unit set up their equipment appropriately, get their IVs hung up and get ready for casualties. I was like sure. So I ran up and down doing that, made sure everything was all set up.

After I finished that, I came back and I found my partner puffing away at some oxygen. I go what's the matter with you? He said I got chest pain, and he's like don't you dare call the Lieutenant over. So I was like, yeah, okay. So I was like is it because of the dust? He goes yeah. So I figured it was because he sucked so much dust in, like myself, and he said my chest is burning from all the dust. Like all right, just chill for a moment, I'll be back. I came back and he looked even worse and I was like you're going to the hospital whether you like it or not, and he started arguing with me. I said don't fuck with me, you're going to the hospital. They had a physician come over that was down there volunteering. So he looked at him, looked at his EKG, did something, he said you're going to Vinny's and that's final. So I said, listen, just do it, go, be safe, don't be stupid. I'll be all right. So, actually, excuse me,



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just before that, I was along the waterfront esplanade. I'm sorry.

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. Along the esplanade where people were coming down the waterfront there. There were a lot of people running down, so I was escorting down this way towards where the boats were to get them over to, I guess, Liberty Island or to the Jersey side or wherever the boats were taking them to. I saw this one boat with a camera crew on it. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but the Green Monster they call it. It's like a high-speed tour boat that races up and down the water around the island, gives a tour of the island. Well, I saw them. I waved them over and I told them, go around south, come around and turn to where the bulkheads are and start picking up people and get them out of here, and they listened to me. They actually did that. It was pretty good.

I remember seeing this one Lieutenant from I think Engine 229, that's the area up in Greenpoint where I cover mostly. So I was like you're from 229. He goes yeah, who are you? Oh, you're from that ambulance around the area. Yeah. He said, listen, do yourself a favor and get out of here. I think just as

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I was heading south again, that's when the north tower collapsed because I remember seeing another huge cloud of dust basically just cover this whole area going to the west side, all over towards the Hudson River area.

I made it back down towards just before the Battery here. I don't know what street that is. But that's when my partner started having more problems and he was told you're out of here, after we were at this one park resting for a moment. Now we're with all those ambulances. I'm just sitting there doing absolutely nothing. He's gone, I got nothing, and I was getting very itchy. When I start wanting to do something, I get itchy. I'm like I have to do something. I can't just sit on my laurels and do nothing. That's just not my style.

I told this one Lieutenant, I said, I'm going back up there. I'm doing nothing here. This is B.S. Why are we sitting here doing nothing? He's like hang out here Pierce, don't you disappear on me. Then I stood around waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. It was just a waiting period and it was driving me absolutely fucking insane. I mean, literally, I was really going nuts. So I was like, listen. At one point I was like, I got no girlfriend,

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no dependents. I'm not worried. I don't know if it's like a superman feeling or something, but I had to get up there because I know people needed my help and that was it.

So I spoke with another Lieutenant. I don't know who it was. Maybe Lieutenant Soto. I said I got to go back up there. He says, well, let me go with you a little bit, I'll see how far it is. He was like how far away is it? I was like around four blocks. I lied to him. It was a little farther than four blocks. But we got up there. He became the triage Lieutenant and I was his aide for the day between One Liberty Plaza and Engine 10/Ladder 10. So basically we just stayed there the entire night, just transporting patients back and forth, getting up to Liberty triage, where I did some work in helping out as well. That's what I did all night. I maybe had a two-hour catnap on the marble floor at One Liberty Plaza, woke up again, not even, you know, something like that.

I remember at one point I was back down, I think I was down by -- in front of Engine 10/Ladder 10 -- no. I was in front of Liberty Plaza and they said they needed morphine down there. They found somebody inside and they were going to have to take his

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legs off and they need morphine. They saw me and they said are you a medic? I go yeah. You got morphine? I go yup. The guy who was with me, he said you're coming with me and they physically grabbed me. They said you're coming with us. They said you're coming with us, we need you now, we need your drugs.

At that point I found myself on the pile and I don't know if -- it felt like I was hallucinating because just looking around, I was up on top of that pile a good way in, it was hot and I was looking at all these holes down. It was like one wrong step and I'm dead. If I fell into that little hole, I'm dead and that was it, because I could see the flames below, you could see the redness. I knew if I went in, it was like the pits of hell. It was like Dante's Inferno, I guess you could call it. I was in the remains of the south tower, between the south tower and near the hotel, and it was something, just being there, all the way in. I don't know how far in I was. I must have been a good 200 feet in when I was going up and down these piles of debris. Then I got called out and I learned that they managed to free the guy's legs up, so that made me happy. I got out of there. I climbed all the way back, assisted with the hose pulling because

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they needed a lot of fire hose in there. So I was part of the hose line with a lot of other firemen and all the rescue workers.

I took a break again, headed back over to 10/10, sat there, drank, had some fluids, and I think that's where I saw Chief Tramontana. He came over to me. He says are you all right? I just looked at him. I was like how can one not feel all right? Look what just happened. I almost had a brush with death. He said all right, just take a break, relax.

I worked through the night. I met up with some other people, EMT Bruce Hydock, Battalion 57, EMT Richardson, Battalion 57. Who else? EMT Jason Steele, Battalion 57. Those are the only familiar faces I can remember. In fact, it's funny because you couldn't even recognize them at first because they had to remind me who they were.

I took a minor break and went back down to 10/10, met up with this Lieutenant, I forgot who it was, and I said, listen, boss, I'm going to take a walk over to -- over by Liberty and see what my ambulance looks like. I started walking down Liberty, but that was completely blocked up between Greenwich and Washington from the debris from the south tower. So I

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remember walking down Greenwich, down Albany, and coming back around. I found my ambulance and it was pushed over to the side, I think. I think some earth movers or something came over and pushed it over to the side out of the way.

I walked over to where I was taking cover, walked back, got something to drink, something to munch on, and I think that's when I was just like somewhere by Engine 10/Ladder 10, I kind of laid down for a moment on a long board, and I think that's where I really started to pass out, when I think Captain Olsen, I think it was -- I don't know who. I think it was Captain Olsen who ordered me to go to the command post, which was far up on the West Side Highway by I guess St. John's. I don't know where they set it up. By the school.

Q. The college or the high school?

A. There was a high school, some school, a public school.

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. Maybe that was it. That might have been it. He walked me inside there, and then I found a cot over by some triage area and I just walked over to it and just completely fell asleep. I got up like two hours

J. PIERCE

later, walked over across the highway to the command post.

Q. How did you get back to your battalion?

A. I was driven back. Captain Burns saw me. A friend of hers was heading back to Brooklyn and he said he would give me a ride back, which he did. I headed back.

Q. Approximately what time did you get back to Battalion 57?

A. I don't know. Maybe 12:00 o'clock, I guess. I can't remember.

Q. Midnight you mean?

A. Day.

Q. The next day?

A. The next day.

Q. The next afternoon. Okay.

A. All I know is I was on the clock for about 32 straight hours. I was on the clock that long. Then I just -- a bunch of people approached me and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I showered up up there and cleaned up, had all my stuff put in red bags because there was just so much blood on

J. PIERCE

them and everything.

That was pretty much it for that day. Then I didn't go back there to work, on one of the standby units, the ALS units, for like about maybe two weeks -- I stayed away from there. I was definitely there for a long time. People were telling me you were considered MIA for a long time. That's pleasing to know, to find out that I was missing in action. But I was, I guess, to some people. My radio didn't work at one point. I guess -- I don't know why it didn't work. So they said they were calling for you like crazy because they didn't know where you were. I was like me neither. There were no street signs. Everything was smashed down.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add to the events of that day?

A. I don't know what there is to add, if I've forgotten so many things or if they stick in my head. Maybe some things are just being recessed away and then it's going to come out in the wrong moments. I've forgotten a lot of stuff. I've forgotten names of people. I guess my memory span is kind of shot to hell a little bit. I'm still coughing a lot and I don't even smoke. That's all I can think of right now.



J. PIERCE

MS. BASTEDENBECK: Okay. This interview is concluded. The time now is 1449 hours. Thank you very much, Joel.

PARAMEDIC PIERCE: You're welcome.

File No. 9110486

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT JASON CHARLES

Interview Date: January 23, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. CHARLES

MR. ECCLESTON: Today's date is January 23rd, 2002. The time is 2112 hours and my name is Christopher Eccleston of the New York City Fire Department World Trade Center Task Force. I am conducting an interview with the following individual:

Q. Please state your name.

A. Jason Charles.

Q. Your rank.

A. EMT.

Q. Shield.

A. 5114.

Q. And your assigned battalion.

A. 13.

Q. Mr. Charles, were you assigned to the World Trade Center disaster?

A. No, I wasn't.

Q. Did you respond to the World Trade Center disaster on 9/11?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. In your own words, could you please tell me about the events of the day?

A. Yes. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We got to Madison

J. CHARLES

and 28th Street when we saw -- me and my son saw black smoke. I had thought it was just a regular structural fire. So I told my son, listen, let's -- my son, mind you, is only three years old. I said let's go check out this fire. So we start walking down the block and we get up to Fifth Ave. and a lady walks up to me and says a plane hit the Trade Center, and I looked at her like she was crazy. I said it might have been a helicopter, not a plane. So I kept walking. I got to Broadway and now I could see the smoke just traveling east over the city, and another guy walked up to us and said a plane hit the towers. So I speeded up my walking to Sixth Ave., put my son on a bike, and we got to Sixth Ave. and I saw the giant hole in Tower 1.

As I'm staring at the hole in Tower 1, I walked across the street, across Sixth Ave. to the west side of Sixth Avenue, to see Tower 2, and at the time Tower 2 was intact. It wasn't touched yet. I looked down at my son and I repeated to him I couldn't believe what was going on, and I told him, oh, my God, and I heard people calling, oh, my God, look, look, and as I looked up, the second plane hit the second tower and there was a humongous fireball rolling up the side of the building. What delayed reaction I heard was the

J. CHARLES

sound itself, the explosion itself.

So I looked back down at any son and said (inaudible), baby, we have to go home, thinking to myself, Jesus, they're going to need every last EMS personnel in the city to go down. So I hesitantly scrambled along the street. At one point I lost my son for maybe a minute and I looked for him and then I found him. I got him back on the bike. We rode back across the street. I started dialing numbers to call my brother, my wife. At the time me and her were broken up, so we were just getting back together. So I started looking for anybody to call to take my son.

So I remembered the baby-sitter. So I shoot back down 28th Street over to Second and Third, taking my time, making sure I didn't get into an accident with my son. So it took me probably about ten minutes from Sixth Ave. to Second and Third with my son. We get upstairs, I knock on the baby-sitter's door, and she immediately takes my son out of my hands. She doesn't even ask me what's going on. So she takes my son and I give her something else I had on my bike, and she goes you going down there? I go yeah. She goes you want to look out my window? I told her, no, I'm going to get a better view.

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As I'm waiting for the elevator, for some reason, the elevators broke down, both of them. So now I'm waiting another five, ten minutes for the elevators and I'm like getting more and more frustrated as I'm waiting for the elevators, and then I said screw it. I threw the bike on my back and I ran down 19 flights of steps. I got downstairs, I jumped on my bike, I got myself together, I checked the gears of my bike, made sure I had air in my tires, and then I took off.

I took off to 27th Street because you can cut through the blocks between the buildings, and I took off 27th Street, made a left, cut down towards Second, and then made a quick right going towards the Trade Center. I'm riding on the curb and I see a fire truck to my left and I speed up peddling and I jump off the curb next to the fire truck, landing probably about a foot away from the truck. A firefighter on the truck looks at me and he's like holy, you know, like he couldn't believe it, and now I'm riding next to the fire truck speeding down Second Ave., which is a slight downhill. I didn't even get the engine number. It was an engine truck, but I didn't get the engine number.

So I'm racing down Second Ave. with all the emergency vehicles, like following behind a fire

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truck. I come up onto a station wagon, I cut my brakes, and I just missed the station wagon, almost getting pinned between a bus. So now I'm flying, you know, I squeezed just between a bus and a station wagon to pull off to the left again to almost get hit by an ESU truck. So now at this point I'm passing 23rd Street and the space becomes tight between another bus and a van and I barely squeezed through that and I'm flying down the street, down Second Ave., and now I'm passing the Police Academy, which I think is on 21st Street, 21st Street between Second and Third, and I see a cop standing with the barricades, next to the barricade, and he's looking like he wants to go. He's like, you know, he looked like he was all amped as I'm passing him. He just wanted to -- it was like he wanted to jump in the next vehicle and go.

So I keep racing down there. I get to about Beth Israel Hospital, I don't know if it's 16th Street, 15th Street, and I start to lose all my energy. The first wave of emergency vehicles had left me at about 15th Street. I kept pedaling. I stopped at 14th Street because of the light. I wasn't about to get hit by another bus going crosstown. So I start peddling again as the light turns green and I start picking up

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my speed a little bit and then I hear a second wave of emergency vehicles coming and they gave me the second adrenaline rush. So I started racing with them and I'm racing alongside of the ESU truck for a good block and then the streets just opened up and they start going and the ambulances start passing me. I think three FDNY ambulances and a Metro Care ambulance passed me, and then the rest of them were cop cars, fire trucks, and I guess a Battalion Chief, a fire division suburban.

So I get to Houston. Second Avenue now turns into Christie Street and I jump back onto a curb, and at that point all of -- the second wave of emergency vehicles left me and I'm flying down the street and I jump off a curb again, landing next to a minivan, which I just missed, or it missed me, and as I'm coming down the street, I'm not sure if it's East Broadway that crosses Christie Street, but a third wave of emergency vehicles come down and I could hear them at least three or four blocks behind me. They start passing me and I start rushing with them and they gave me a third adrenaline rush.

I'm rushing with them and we all get to Canal Street, where everybody came to a stop because -- I'm



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not sure if it's Ladder 9 or Engine 9 was coming off the Brooklyn Bridge. It probably wasn't Ladder 9. But there was another ladder truck coming off the Manhattan Bridge and everybody stopped to let them go, and then I waved on the other emergency vehicles who were behind me to go ahead of me and they all flew down Canal Street for a block and hung a right on -- I don't know what street it was. But I know that, when I went behind them, as I ride behind them, now we're in Chinatown. As I ride behind them, I guess they were like special forces from the courts or the FBI building, in that area, federal cops or whatever, jumped in front of me and I yelled at him EMS, EMS, and he jumped out of my way and I kept riding.

At this point now I'm passing behind the courts. I got behind the courts and I go underneath like the Brooklyn Bridge overheads and I pull up on I think it's Reade Street, right next to City Hall, and then I see both the towers smoking like chimneys. I mean, it was like the worst sight in the world. As I pulled up onto -- I think it was -- I'm not sure what street, but it wasn't Reade Street, I'm not sure what street, but it was right next to City Hall -- I saw one person fall out the building. As I keep riding, I look

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over to my left and there's just a crowd of people staring like they couldn't believe it, and I'm staring at them and they're staring at the towers. I see detectives and FBI agents running around the street like they didn't know what to do, what was going on.

So I had my ID out prior to that because I was trying to flag down a vehicle as I was racing down Second Ave. to stop. I mean, I knew they wasn't going to stop, but if they did, good, I would have jumped in with them. But nobody stopped. So I had my ID out prior to that and I was flashing all the detectives and FBI agents and they're just waving me through.

I get to Broadway, Broadway and I think it's Vesey, and I slam on my brakes because a lady cuts in front of me. Now, at that point, I just started like lightly riding to look for a Lieutenant, an EMS Lieutenant, and I ran into an EMS Lieutenant about once I got to Dey and Broadway. So I identified myself as an EMS off-duty, and she was like good, we're setting up triage. They set up triage between Dey and the next street north of Dey -- south of Dey. Sorry. So she starts setting up triage and I told her I was going to be back. I was going to lock my bike up. I locked my bike up on Dey between Broadway and Fulton and I go

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back and I started triaging patients. I had no triage tags in my hand. So they had already had the triage tags arriving, so I started asking questions, you know, I had no ACRs neither. So I started asking them questions about their history, if they had asthma history or whatever.

Then I ran into another EMS guy who had a bike. I was sidetracked by him. He asked me where did I lock my bike up, and I told him over here. I took over to where my bike was. Me and him chained our bikes up together. We went back over there and we started triaging more patients. I ran into one patient who said she was having an asthma attack. Now, at that point I had went over to a Metro Care bus to ask if they had any albuterol. They didn't have any for whatever reason. So then I went -- I remembered where my Lieutenant went -- the Lieutenant I ran into. Sorry. I think she was from Battalion 4. I ran over to Fulton and Church Street, where there was another triage center set right in front of the towers, in front of the Millenium Hotel across the street from the towers.

At that point, I run down Fulton Street and a PA cop, Port Authority cop, stops me, and I flash my ID

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and he's giving me flack about, you know, you're not going down here. I'm like, listen, I've got an asthma patient over there on Broadway. He's like no, you ain't going down there. She's not getting albuterol today. I was like all right, you know Rudy Charles? Rudy Charles is a Port Authority cop, my father. He goes no, not today. So I can see he was just being difficult.

So I ran back over to Broadway and I ran into a firefighter named Firefighter Anderson. If I'm not mistaken, he's an IC for the fire cadets, the fire cadet program. I used to be a fire cadet. That's how I knew him. He gave me a turnout coat to wear because I needed to be identified as a city worker. So he gave me the turnout coat and I ran back over to -- and he was standing on Dey and Broadway. I ran back over to Fulton and Church and the PA cop was still standing there and he runs over to me and I tell him, you know, stay the fuck over there, and he's like all right, the FBI is going to stop me. So as I'm walking by him, the FBI cops looked -- the FBI agents. Sorry. They're looking at me and they're like, you know, they just looked at me and just let me go through.

So I get over to the Lieutenant. He was

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talking to a Chief and a Captain. I didn't get their names. The Chief had an eagle on his collar, so this was a deputy. So now I asked the Lieutenant was there any albuterol. She says go check the ambulance over there. I didn't get the ambulance unit or the bus number. There were two EMTs working on a severe burn patient, it looked like 30 percent of his body was burned, and they were working on him. I jumped on the bus and I asked for albuterol, and the guy turned around and he gave me albuterol and a nebulizer.

So I take the albuterol and the nebulizer and I run back over to Dey and Broadway, where the other triage center was. I get over there. Metro Care found their albuterol. Okay. So after all that running around, Hatzolah comes. They're coming in and now they have nine EMTs and I think two paramedics. I had told them we need at least three of your guys over at Church and Fulton because there's only two EMTs there, the Captain, the Lieutenant and the Chief, and he's like no, we're going to keep them here because everybody is coming here. I was like, guy, there's more people coming out of that building going to that triage center than those two EMTs can handle -- three. Sorry. It was three EMTs there. He's like no. I was like,

J. CHARLES

listen, right now I need your help. I don't need you to give me your -- what's that called?

Q. Sarcasm?

A. No. Superior complex. And he was like all right, all right. So then I said I'll be right back, and then I ran back over to the Lieutenant on Fulton and Dey -- I mean Fulton and Church, and I get over there and I'm like, Lieutenant, we got a triage center that has too many chiefs and no indians. We need somebody with status to go over there and let them know what's going on. So she's like okay and she sends an EMT over there. I think he was a medic. I'm not even sure. But this guy I remember, a white guy about my height, 5'10", 5'11", he had shades on at the time, spiky hair, I think he's from Battalion 4, too, he walked over to Dey and Church. He started to cut up Dey to go to Church, which is right next to the Century 21 store.

So now, I guess, I saw him cutting up there, so now I made the decision that I was going to go into the buildings and start helping everybody else out because I saw the firefighters standing over there carrying people out and there were a lot of EMTs over there who weren't FDNY. They were like, I guess, from

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Bronx -- I mean like Brooklyn and Queens. So they were there and they had like EMT on the tape on their shirt and they were like helping people out. I started to head towards the building and these two EMT females, they had this heavysset lady. They were walking her over to the triage center. So she gets over to the triage center and she sees me and a Lieutenant and decides that she wants to pass out. So, all right, she passes out on the ground. So I started to walk past her because I'm like, well, they got her. Then I saw that the Lieutenant and the two EMS females were having a problem lifting her up. So I told the two EMS ladies to move and me and the Lieutenant picked her up. I grabbed her and the Lieutenant picked her up by the legs and we start walking over slowly to the curb, and then I heard an explosion from up, from up above, and I froze and I was like, oh, shit, I'm dead because I thought debris was going to hit me in the head and that was it.

Then everybody stops and looks at the building and then they take off. The Lieutenant dropped her legs and ran. The triage center, everybody who was sitting there hurt and, oh, you know, help me, they got up and everybody together got up and ran. I

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looked at them like why are they running? I look over my shoulder and I says, oh, shit, and then I turned around and looked up and that's when I saw the tower coming down. I saw the -- it looked like the top maybe 70, 60 floors coming off the building, and I had stood there thinking maybe the towers were not going to hit me. Then I looked closer and two pieces of debris fly over my head about 40, 50 stories up, flying over my head, and I was like, shit, I'm out of here.

I grabbed the lady and I tugged on her twice and she wouldn't get up at that point. She got up on one knee, actually, and then she wouldn't get up. Then I let her go and I started to run, and I'm hauling ass down Fulton, up Fulton actually, running east. Actually, as I'm running east, I stopped and I told myself what are you doing? Jason Charles, go back for her. So I turned around and went back to the lady. I get back down to -- I mean, it was only like ten steps. So I took another ten steps back and I get back down there and she's gone, and I'm like all right.

So now I look over to my left real quick and I see two firefighters running at me with this horrified look on their face. One firefighter was trying to drop his Scott pack and it got caught. The



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buckle that goes around the Scott pack around the waist got caught. So he was trying to -- he was unbuckling that while he was running. The other guy, he dropped it off his shoulders, but it looked like it got caught onto his arms, and then the dust hit them and then the metal crashed on them, and I turned around and I started running. I saw people -- as I'm turning around running, I picked up people who were coming out this corridor right in front of Millenium Hotel that leads you into like the mall plaza on Liberty. I saw people running out of there, like running against the wall, against Building 5, running north. Yes, running north.

So they were all -- they're running north and I'm running and in my head I'm like let's jump in that bus over there. I said, nah, just run. Then I'm starting to run and I see firefighters, you know, I mean, like when everybody started running, I'm seeing two firefighters drop their Scott packs, FBI agents took off, EMTs took off, and that told me this is a real situation, this wasn't nothing to take lightly. So that's when I had ran and left the lady, came back for her.

Now, as I see the two firefighters

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(inaudible), I made the decision not to jump in the back of the ambulance that was parked right on the corner of Fulton and Church. I start running up the block. As I start running up Fulton, I see this lady who I left behind hauling ass up Fulton and her dress is like flapping in the wind, and I'm like look at her go, you know, and I'm just running and she had a nice lead on me, so she was like half a block up already. But I made sure I found her first before I left.

So I started running and now I'm panicking. I'm like, oh, man, I'm dead, I'm dead, and there's all these people in front of me and they're running slow and I'm like, oh, Jesus Christ, and I stopped running and I started walking real fast behind them because I wasn't going to push anybody out of the way. So there was an opening and I took the opening and I started hauling ass, but this older black guy falls in front of me and I jump over him and I stopped and turned around and two people scooped him up and kept running. It was like a football scene, like they scooped up a football and kept running with him, and they're running and then now I'm running. I almost started crying at one point. I'm like, oh, man, I'm dead, I'm dead, and I stopped running and said screw it, I'm going to die

J. CHARLES

right here, let me take it as it is. Then something said, stupid, run, you know, run and die running. So I started running again.

At one point -- at some point, I'm not sure, but the building -- that horrible twisting metal sound of a freight train or whatever -- it's the worst sound in the world -- stopped. But then it started again. Then I started hauling ass again, and at one point I stopped, like maybe 20 feet before I got to Broadway, still on Fulton, flying up to Broadway, and I let everybody run past me. I said everybody go, go, go. Now I ran the rest the way down to Broadway and then I looked to my right down towards Dey and I see at least a 40, 50-story ball of dust rushing at us. I'm like holy shit. I'm like all right, run, and I kept running and I ran towards Vesey, and then Vesey, the dust came around there, but for some reason the dust didn't come up Fulton yet, not as fast and hard and as dark as it did at Vesey and Dey.

So now I had that trapped feeling and I thought I was really screwed because I knew behind that was nothing but death. If you sucked on the dust, that was pretty much it. So I yelled everybody over here and I pointed to a store. The store's name -- it was a

J. CHARLES

delicatessen, actually. It's called Au Pain or Au Bon Pain.

Q. Au Bon Pain?

A. Yes, thank you, that famous delicatessen. I ran over there and like three other people followed me. One guy I remember stopping, like he was still on Fulton, running up Fulton. He had stopped dead in his tracks and covered his face. That was actually before the dust started rushing at us, but I thought I'd add that in. There was a guy, he just stopped dead in his tracks, he didn't want to run anymore, and I remember reaching for him and then the dust caught him and I kept running. But the dust coming up Fulton was a little lighter, and I don't know why it was light there, but it was dark as hell coming down Dey and Vesey.

So anyway, we run up to the store and I grabbed the door and I'm "open the fucking door," because it was locked and I had this look on my face like hurry up, like I was about to cry again, and the manager of the store scrambled through his keys and he ran over to the door and he unlocked it. By the time he got to the door, the dust caught us. I held onto the door and then I felt the door open and I opened it

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up and I shoved the two people in and then I closed the door right behind me. I get inside the store and I start cursing and I almost started to pick a chair up and throw it, if you know what I'm saying, through the window, but that wouldn't have made no sense because when I looked behind the window, it was completely black. I mean, it was like looking into hell.

As I'm looking, I see one person, it looked like a white guy with glasses, walking up against the glass of the window. I'm like holy shit. So I run back outside and the door was locked again. I turned around to the manager, open the fucking door, and he's like, oh, I'm sorry. I said leave this shit open, and he said all right. He opens the door and I opened the door and I yell outside. I yell outside and it sounded like I was yelling in an empty room, like the acoustics -- if anybody ever heard the acoustics in an empty room, it was like that, and it was scary. I was like holy shit. Then I closed the door and not even five seconds later, three people came, it looked like flies, to the door, tu-tu-tu-tu, like they all bumped into it. I opened the door, rushed them in, and they came in and they couldn't see and I asked the guy for water. I said wash their faces down, and he was like

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all right, and the manager and a few other people started washing their faces down.

Then more people started coming to the door and they started letting them in and they started washing their faces off. I washed one guy's face off. Then I told the lady, here, take over because I saw people -- the store now leads to the back. There's a back exit that leads into the building. I think the building we were in was 222 Broadway or 225. I'm not sure which one it was. 222 Broadway. So I go to the back and there's like 60 people in the lobby of this building and I'm like, Jesus Christ. I was by myself and I had no tech bag. The only thing I had on me was albuterol and a nebulizer, and unless I was going to blow into the nebulizer, you know, that was the extent of my medical care.

So at one point I started -- I tried to get the crowd's attention and a guy gave me a bullhorn. He gives me the bullhorn and I start announcing who I was, that I wasn't a firefighter, because I had on a firefighter's jacket, I wasn't a firefighter, I was an EMT and that my name was Jason Charles. They're like okay and they started listening. Somebody had asked me what happened and then two other people were like,

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yeah, what happened? What happened? I was like, Jesus Christ, they don't even know. I was like all right. I was like ladies and gentlemen, Tower 2 just collapsed, the entire building came down, and they're like, oh, my God. People started crying and stuff like that. But I gave it to that entire crowd. They held it together. I wasn't like they panicked like in one of those movies and flipped out. They held it together. So I'm like okay.

So then my next question was -- no. Someone had asked me can we go outside? I was like -- and then I know this is like really unprofessional, but then, at that point, I was just really aggravated. I was like you know what? If you want to fucking go outside, you know what I'm saying, and suck on that fucking dust, be my guest, but I suggest that you all stay in here, wait until it clears out in another 15, 20 minutes, and we can all go east towards the river and get out of here. They were like all right, all right. So they started calming down, and I was like ladies and gentlemen, does anybody have asthma? Like 30 people raised their hands. I was like, oh, Jesus Christ. So I started separating the asthma patients from everybody else, and I put the asthma patients back in the delicatessen so I

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could keep my eye on them had anybody broke out in a severe asthma attack.

At one point a medic came running in through one of the doors covered in dust coughing and I was like -- and there was a guy standing behind me and I was like, yo, big man, take him inside the delicatessen and watch him. He was like all right. So he walked him inside. Now, I'm still taking in asthma patients. I mean, it was like at least 30, now it looked like 40 because people just started popping up. So then they started -- they went in the delicatessen.

Then somebody brought to my attention a chick who had a laceration on her head, a woman, sorry, had a laceration on her head, approximately 20-year-old African-American female, and the lac was probably maybe half an inch wide, it looked pretty deep, she might have needed stitches for it. There was a guy who was applying pressure to her head with a cloth, and I was like let me see it, and he was like, yeah, she's bleeding pretty badly. When he lifted it up, it wasn't bleeding too bad. So she was pretty much okay. So I told him wait here. I'm going to go back outside and look for a tech bag or something I could use.

So I went back outside. At the time I had



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the bandana around my head. I took it from around my head and put it around my mouth. So now I'm walking outside and I'm asking people are they okay because now at this point people are just dazed. It was like one of those nuclear war movies where people are just in a daze. So I walked into a few people and I'm asking them are they okay, are they okay. One heavysset gentleman, I had to ask him, are you okay, sir? Are you okay? He's like, yeah, yeah, I'm all right. I said, listen, sir. Either walk east to the river or walk into that delicatessen over there. He said all right.

At one point I came up to a bunch of officers who were sitting on the cemetery that's right there. They were all sitting on the wall like they couldn't believe what was going on. I had asked if anybody was hurt -- no. I had said who's hurt over here? Who's bleeding? Because I saw blood on the floor. There was an officer who had little minor lacerations on his hand. I was like, listen, guys, you guys got to get out of here because Tower 1 is going to fall because for some reason I had just known that the tower was going to come down at that point because when Tower 2 came down, the ground was actually shaking.

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So then I started walking. I got back over to Church and Fulton and I looked to my left and I could see it, but barely, a big piece of metal sticking into the ground. It reminded me of for some reason Planet of the Apes, the new one. So I looked at it and I was like, Jesus Christ, and I saw a Fire Marshal and like two detectives walk out of the dust over there, and they came over, you know, they came walking out. Before that, before I saw them walk out, I found a Battalion Chief's helmet, and I looked at it and picked it up, and I remember seeing a Battalion Chief, he hauled ass up the block, so he was okay. I remember seeing him run on Fulton before the towers came down. I mean, this guy was an older guy and I never seen an old man move so quick. So he was all right. So I took his helmet and I looked at it and I was like -- and I looked at the towers and there was debris still coming off the building.

Mind you, before that, which I found a little weird, before the towers fell, there were a lot of people falling out of the building like, you know, I don't know, like they were just throwing themselves out, like they were just lined up and going, like paratroopers, and at one point right before the towers

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came down that stopped. It was like the people that were coming out just stopped coming out the window for whatever reason. I found that a little weird.

As I was walking over to Tower 1 with the helmet in my hand, I had put it on my head. I'm like, you know, well, he's okay. I'm going to put this on and protect myself from anything falling off the building because I had nothing. Then I took it off again and I'm like, ah, I'm not going to put this back on my head, it's not even mine. So I'm like -- and the Fire Marshal, what is that? What is that in your hand? What are you doing with that? I'm like, okay. I'm like, it's a Battalion Chief's helmet. He's okay. He's like, give me the helmet. All right, here. I'm sorry, man. So I took it off because I think he had saw me because when I took it off and I looked behind me, he was already coming up, but he hadn't said anything. So I guess he put two and two together, you know what I mean. Me with a Battalion Chief's helmet doesn't quite look too well. So he's like, oh, and I'm like, listen, I'm EMS. He's like all right.

Then a detective came up and said we're pulling back to Chambers. I'm like word? He's said yeah because Tower 1 is going to come down. He said

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the same thing. I was like all right. At that point I looked up at Tower 1 and I could see that she was leaning slightly but not much, and as I looked over to -- I looked at the tower, I looked at everybody else and everybody else is hauling -- everybody is walking up, walking south towards Chambers. So the officer offers me some water, I take it, I'm starting to drink it as I'm walking, and I'm walking because he said we got to pull back. I'm like wait a second. I still got those patients in the building.

So he started -- they walked, and I ran up to an ESU truck. Some ESU guys were putting on Scott packs and I was like, yo, you guys got an extra Scott pack so I can go in the building and help you guys out? They were like -- and they started looking for Scott packs, and they were like, yo, we're out of Scott packs. So I go (inaudible)? He was like yeah. I said you guys going in the building, right? He said yeah. The only reason why I didn't go in the building because I had knew that the mall level was completely dust and for me to go in there with nothing on would have pretty much been suicide. So I said all right. They said go up the block to Broadway, there should be another ESU truck over there.

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So I started back over there, and as I'm starting back over there, I looked down -- I think it's Vesey right between Tower 7 and the Trade Center and there were like at least four firefighters over there. It looked like eight, actually, because there were another two walking down. They were long-boarding a guy who must have jumped off the escalator that's like right there on Vesey, and they're long boarding him. I'm like all right.

So I walk over to a fire truck and I take a sip of water that was coming out of the fire truck, and there was this female from England who was on the 90th floor of Tower 1, who told me she had just barely made it out of there. When the towers came down, she lost both her shoes. So she was walking. So I said, listen, I'm walking back to the building over here, you want to come with me? She's like yeah. I'm like all right. So we started walking back. She's walking barefoot because she lost her shoes.

So we get back over to 222 Broadway and we get inside and I'm telling everybody, listen, I couldn't find any equipment, but we're going to have to get out of here because Tower 1 is going to come down. This sergeant, a police officer sergeant goes don't

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tell them that, don't tell them that. I'm like what? He was like -- I was like all right, whatever, forget it, then I'm not going to say it again. Then I go all right, ladies and gentlemen, if we're going to do this, we're going to get out here and we're going to walk east to the river, and I had said that twice, and then I made the mistake of saying west again and I was like damn. Then I said all right everybody, you know what? Screw it. Let's get out of here and just walk east now.

As we're all walking to the back of the building through the freight -- not the freight -- the loading docks in the back of the building. We get to the back -- we don't even get to the back of the building. We start walking back there and then I heard a ground level explosion and I'm like holy shit, and then you heard that twisting metal wreckage again. Then I said shit and everybody started running and I started running behind them, and we get to the door. For some reason, like straight out of a movie, two people ran through the door together and got stuck in the doorway, and I'm like, oh, my God, this is not the time. So they squeezed through and they got through and I squeezed through them and ran around them because

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I just wanted to see which way the towers were falling.

So I get to the loading dock and I run outside and there's people running out the loading dock east to the river like little rats out of a cage, like chu-chu-chu. Then I get to the loading dock outside and I see this 50, 60-story dust rolling down the block again. I'm like holy shit and I sort of moved too quick and fell down, and as I fall down, I look at a police Sergeant -- or a Captain. Sorry. He got covered in the dust because he didn't make it to the doorway in time.

I fell down, and when I fell down, the dust went over my head, and I said shit and I jumped up gapping for air. At that point everybody is screaming get the fuck out of here, and they're like close the gate, close the gate, and the gate was moving like a snail, it was closing so slow. So eight of us jumped on the gate and started using our weight to pull it down and it wouldn't budge. I remember looking over to my right and seeing another EMT. Naomi is her last name. She used to be out of Battalion 16. But I saw her. She was helping us pull the gate down. At one point someone yelled get the fuck out of here,

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everybody get the fuck out of here, go, go, go, and everybody is yelling. It wasn't that yell like, you know, that roller coaster yell or you're yelling at somebody to discipline them. It was like that horrifying scream that everybody was relaying back and forward.

So everybody started hauling ass out of there, and I jumped back onto the deck and I'm like everybody get the fuck out of here and everybody is running. I must have been like the last person out of the room, and by the time I decided to get out of the room, being the last person out, the room was completely -- I mean the loading dock was completely dusty. It was like a fog. You couldn't see anything but the light that was illuminating the room.

So I got back into the lobby and the lobby was dusty and I'm like shit, I'm going to suffocate in here. I started panicking because I couldn't breathe and it was heavily dust to the side. You could see each other but you couldn't breathe. Now I'm panicking and everybody else is like looking for somewhere to breathe, and I remember sticking my face between an elevator door, like the elevator shaft, to try to get some air, and that wasn't working and I'm like shit,



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I'm going to die in here now, suffocating, and then somebody passed me a wet rag. I put the wet rag on my face and I was able to breathe again. So I'm like all right, cool.

Then the same sergeant who told me not to tell anybody the towers were coming down, he asked me, you think we could die from this dust? I'm like right now? No. But eventually? Yes. He's like okay. So then we're all looking for a way out. So now the dust started to come down a little quicker than it did last time. So I walked outside and I'm just like, Jesus Christ. I couldn't even see. Particles were hitting me in my face. I'm like let me go back inside.

I went back inside and at one point I remember I saw a bunch of people run down to the lower levels of the building. So I started running down to the lower levels of the building and I see all these people in there. I went back upstairs to look for a Lieutenant -- a Captain, actually. I said, listen, Captain, I got like 60 people in this building. This is before Tower 1 came down. Sorry. This is before Tower 1 came down. I had told the Captain I had 60 people in the building. He said, listen, I'm going over to -- what's that around where the Liberty boats,

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the boats to the Liberty.

Q. To Ellis Island?

A. No. Where the boats leave from Manhattan over to Ellis Island. He said he was going to be --

Q. The ferry terminal.

A. Thank you. He was going over to the ferry terminal and he was like you're on your own and he left me. I was like okay. That's when I started looking for a tech bag and stuff. That was before Tower 1 came down. So anyway, I ran into another -- I ran into a Lieutenant. He says I'm going to South Ferry. You can stay here if you want. I was like all right, that's two for two, you know what I'm saying? (inaudible) I understood that they were scared. So it wasn't like I could say anything behind him. So I was like all right, I guess it's up to me.

So I went back over to Broadway and Fulton at that point and I just knew both the towers were down. You couldn't see anything, but you just knew they were down. There was no shadow or nothing. So it was like I went back into the building and I said screw it, let me start evacuating the building. So I started going down to the lower levels and I ended up in the gym of the building, the nicest gym I've ever seen in an

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office building. There were like eight guys in there and they're like what's going on? I mean, they were like what's going on but like is anybody leaving the building yet? I'm like, listen, you've got to go upstairs to Duane Reade -- because as a matter of fact, before I went downstairs, I heard all this commotion and I'm hearing voices and shit and I'm like anybody still in there? I went back to the loading docks because I heard the commotion because it's an area where you can go down to the basement levels before you go to the loading docks, and I heard all this commotion in that area and I couldn't for my life figure out where it was coming from. So I went up to the loading docks, I yelled again, no one responded. As I'm walking back to the lobby area, I see a crack and I see people moving around and I go what's that? Oh, shit, that's Duane Reade, and I'm like -- you know, there's people being handed wet rags with water by the Lieutenant and he's telling everybody to walk east.

Q. Is this a PD Lieutenant or an EMS Lieutenant?

A. EMS Lieutenant.

Q. An EMS Lieutenant.

A. An EMS Lieutenant. He's giving people water and a wet rag and telling them to go east to the river,

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go east to the river. So everybody, you know, they're walking east. I'm like, Lieutenant, Charles, 5114, Battalion 13. He's like all right. He said something. He said we're going to get everybody else out of here. I went all right. So that's when I made the decision to go --

Q. Do you remember who that Lieutenant was?

A. No. I couldn't remember for my life who he was. But I remember going back to the basement levels to get everybody else out because I knew there was people still downstairs. So I wound up in the gym. Those guys had a TV set and that's when I found out we were under attack, because prior to that I thought Tower 2 blew up because the engine from the plane hit Tower 2 and exploded inside. It was like stupid, but that's what I thought. Then that's when I knew we were under attack. So I sat there for like 10, 15 minutes, looking at the TV set, and then I was drinking some more water and I was like crazy dehydrated because the bike ride alone wore me out, you know, my legs were just complete rubber.

So now I'm drinking water and at this point I'm with the EMT, Naomi. So we're getting everybody else out of the building. So we got those guys out the

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gym, then I started going lower than that and started getting people out of the office. At one point I went to an office and people were still working. I'm like get the hell out of here. What the hell are you guys doing? They're like okay, you know, they're locking up their stuff. I'm like go. Don't worry about that shit. They're like all right.

So then I had started walking through the lower levels looking for more people and ran into a maintenance room, which was like the best luck in the world because I found boots, because at the time I had Sketcher shoes on and those weren't doing me -- they did me good running from the towers, but after that I needed something heavy-duty. So I found -- and like, you know, which was the luckiest thing in the world, size 13, which are like the hardest shoes to find. So I found those, I put those on, and I started -- me and Naomi and another guy, the maintenance guy, we started walking back. So we walked back upstairs. We walked back upstairs and we started telling people get out of here. So then I told Naomi, you know, listen, get out of here, you know what I'm saying? She's like nah, nah, I'd rather stick with you. I'm like okay, cool. So we stuck together for like at least an hour. At

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this point I was just like walking around on the streets because there was nothing else to do.

So now we went into a building. At one point I went into a building and I ran into a few PD officers, they were like just sitting in there. I don't know what building it was, but it was next to J&R Music World. So we get into J&R Music -- I mean the building next to J&R Music World and they're talking and I overhear the cop telling everybody, yeah, it came over the radio that one of the planes are heading towards the Trade Center and that one of the planes were already hijacked. I'm like, to myself, I'm like, damn, they heard all this report of they hit the buildings. How come no one tried to evacuate the buildings in time? Whatever. At that point, I didn't know how many people died in the buildings neither, but I knew there were people in there. So we're chatting and stuff and then all right, whatever. So I leave them.

So now, a guy, a detective, for some reason lost his shirt, so he's like shirtless. So I ran back into the building to get him a T-shirt that was in the gym downstairs. I get the T-shirt, I run back upstairs, and he was gone. He moved. So then now me

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and the detectives, we're bringing up T-shirts and sweat pants and stuff like that from the gym level because we knew that there was going to be some half-naked people running around, you know, cut, severely cut or whatever and we could use a lot of that stuff as bandages and tourniquets and stuff. So we brought most of that stuff upstairs and we put it in the lobby of the building. We took the Gatorade from the Duane Reade and stuff, we put it in the lobby of the building, 222 Broadway, and we left it there.

So I went back outside and I saw two firefighters like sitting on the ground. It looked like they were just winded, like that was it for them, they weren't going to do anything else. One was Oriental and a white guy sitting together. I went back outside. I ran into another EMS Lieutenant, I don't know who he was, and I was with him for the better part of the day, until I left. I never got his name or anything. But at that point he told me to go to this bus. They had a city bus with all EMS equipment on it, like the defibrillator, oxygen and all that stuff.

So I got on there and a paramedic was like do you need some oxygen? Do you want some oxygen? It looks like you need some oxygen. I'm said I'm all

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right, I'm all right. He's like here, take some of this, it's free. I'm like all right. So I started breathing on the -- I took some O2 because I had a bad headache at that point and oxygen was doing nothing for me, so I put it down and I took it off. The Lieutenant was like, all right, we're going to go over to 225 Broadway, the building right next to the Duane Reade.

So we all grabbed some stuff and we lugged it over. We get into the building. We get to the building, actually. We didn't even get in the building yet because for some reason they wanted to get into Duane Reade. As opposed to walking right into 225 Broadway, they cut Duane Reade open and they used Duane Reade as like -- you know, because they had all the medical equipment and they had peroxide and alcohol and stuff like that. So if we get in there -- we could go in there just to cut into the building.

So now we're setting up triage in the building. They're setting up saline bags and sodium chloride and stuff, they're hanging them up. They had a nice little triage center going on. It looked like a little hospital. So at one point I disappeared because I needed to get some Tylenol. I got me an Excedrin from Duane Reade and popped two of those and the



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headache went away. All right.

So at that point now, we were just waiting for patients and nobody was coming in. It was like, you know. Then we ran into another Lieutenant, Lieutenant Davis. I think he's from Battalion 4, if I'm not mistaken.

(Tape side two.)

-- towers and I heard six loud explosions, and those six loud explosions changed my mind real quick and I went back over to the triage center and it was like you know what? Let me wait here. I had no helmet. I had nothing that would have protected me from anything that hit me in my head. So I stayed where I was at.

I remember at one point, I'm not pretty sure what point it was, I ran over to a hardware shop that the Fire Department had broken into to use a lot of the masks that they had in there. They had the Scott pack masks, and I found a Scott pack mask that was laying there because a firefighter had took a new one and I grabbed his and I put filters in it and I used that to breathe with and see because the dust was just messing my eyes up.

So I went back over to 225 Broadway and I was

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sitting in there, and now at that point we're just all talking, can't believe what's going on. At one point, amongst -- it was three EMTs and two paramedics that I can remember -- four paramedics. Two were HAZTAC and two weren't. It was just quiet and we were just sitting there waiting, and then me and another EMS guy, EMT, we were just like, yo, we can't just sit here and do nothing. So me and him, I never got his name neither, but me and him grabbed a tech bag and we just went outside. So we started heading over to where Building 7 was at and they were like Building 7 is going to collapse, you can't go over there, this and that, and there was another building that they thought was going to collapse that was like right behind the triage center, the building that we were in. So we started walking around.

At one point I was like -- at one point I almost broke down because I had thought my father was dead because he responded to the '93 bombing and he's a Port Authority cop, like I said before. He responded to the '93 bombing. He was on West Street in front of the tower. So I thought he might have been over there. So I said, if anything, I'm going to walk over there, try and work my way over there and look for

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him. So I'm going -- like I started walking towards Chambers now to look for him because I'm looking for a Port Authority cop and I knew that that's where everybody pulled back to, which was Chambers.

So I started working my way over there and I run into a group of police officers who were sitting in front of BMCC, BMCC's garden. There's a garden and then there's an apartment complex and that's where they were sitting. So we had a conversation. They had no idea -- they knew what was going on, but they didn't know how bad it was over there. So I started telling them what was going and they were like, Jesus Christ.

As I started walking back over to Chambers, going south again to Chambers, because we were a little north of Chambers where we ran into the police officers, I started walking -- me and the EMT started walking south, I had ran into a firefighter. I think, if I'm not mistaken, he said Engine 9 or Ladder 9. That's where I got that from. He was looking for his boys and he couldn't find any of them and he had nothing on, only his bunker pants, and he looked totally bent out of shape. It was like at the time it didn't even occur to me to help him and look for his guys because I didn't know so many firefighters had

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died in the towers like that. Then anyway, I was really concerned about looking for my father.

So I went back off and then I ran into Pete Rosie. I forgot what unit he was on. But I ran into him and he was glad to see me, I was glad to see him, it was a face that I recognized. So we started talking a little bit. We talked. I gave him some Excedrins because he had a bad headache, too.

So we walked, me and the EMT now, we walked over to West Street and Chambers where they had like all the EMS and firefighters and everybody was just there waiting, and I ran into Jerry Toyloy of Battalion 13. I ran into him. We were talking a little bit. I ran into another EMS guy from our station, but I forgot who he was. Then I started looking for my father again.

I ran into a carload of Port Authority cops. I jump in front of the car and almost got hit, and they stopped and they were like, you know, they looked at me like what the -- you know what I'm saying? I'm saying you guys know Rudy Charles? They were like, yeah, you're his son, right? I said yeah. You seen him? They were like, yeah, he's probably still over there in Jersey. I was like all right, all right, that makes

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sense. Keep the older guys over there and bring in the new guys. So I found out he was okay and my day was a lot better. So at that point now it was just about helping anybody who came out.

For at least three, four hours after that, there was just nothing to do. The triage center we were in had to be evacuated because they were pretty sure that building was going to come down into it. So we all moved over to Pace University. At that point there was just nothing but cops. I don't know why there were court officers over there. It didn't even make sense that the court officers were there. This is my opinion. But they were there like just milling around. Cops, firefighters, everybody was just helping out bringing all the equipment over to Pace University. Then they had an even better triage center set up over there. They had like little beds and stuff. At that point I ran into a few EMTs I recognized. I went into Salguera from 16. Let's see. Who else did I run into? That was it. Then I ran into a few fire cadet buddies that I graduated with throughout the day and that was pretty much it.

At one point, I think it was Lieutenant David, he had said -- it was around 7:00 o'clock at

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night. He had said for us to go home because they weren't going to pull anybody out, and I knew they weren't going to pull anybody out alive, but just in case they had a flood of bodies they were going to pull out, I could help. But at that point I was just very drained, pissed off, upset, sad, scared. It was like you know what?

So then I went back to my bike. I went back to my bike, which was on Dey, and she was completely a mess. Her tires were burnt off. She was completely dusted. So I took the chain off and I lugged her up -- I put the bike on my back and I started walking towards Chambers, and I ran into a firefighter, who questioned me about the fire jacket I had on. He had looked at me and he was like what are you doing with that jacket? I'm like I'm EMS. He's like, oh, okay. I'm like you think I'd be stealing a bike at a time like this? He goes, it's not the bike I'm worried about. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Prior to that I did break open a command car just for -- you know, if anybody wondered why (inaudible). I broke into a command car. I had asked

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a firefighter at one point to open it up for me. I asked him for an ax or a Halligan tool. He was like, well, who are you? I was like I work for EMS. He was like you got any ID? Just the way he said it pissed me off, so I didn't even show him ID. I walked away. I go over to a police officer and I go, guys, can you do me a favor and open up the command car for me? Without any questions asked, ID or anything like that, he went over to the command car, busted the glass open, and we got all the equipment out of there like that.

There were few little triage centers, as a matter of fact, throughout the day that were like set up that started being shut down and moved to a bigger triage center. I found out there was one in Liberty Plaza. So throughout the day I was just helping collect equipment. I was carrying the tanks, the oxygen tanks. The crate holds, I think, ten, twelve, and I carried like one of those a whole block before I decided I wasn't superman because those things are heavy. I asked for help and carried it the rest of the way. But before I would have to go home, I had to take that bike on my back and walk from -- at that point I was where Pace University was at -- all the way to Canal Street carrying the bike on my back, and that was

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pretty much it.

I got home -- I got to 28th Street and I remember people just looking at me like, Jesus Christ, look at him, like they couldn't believe it. I went into a funeral parlor because they had a TV on and they were showing all this stuff that happened, and I had never actually seen the planes go into the towers because when I was in the gym, at the point when I was in the gym, I just heard we were under attack and that the Pentagon was hit and the Trade Center and Pennsylvania. But I didn't see the plane go into the building until I got into the funeral parlor like hours later, and I sat with them and they were like, oh, my God, you were down there? They're like, yo, you want some water? You want something to eat? You know what I mean? That felt good that they acknowledged me like that. I'm like no, don't worry about that. I just want to watch this real quick.

Then I got home, back to my at the time girlfriend, now wife. I got home and she was crying. I got home and my parents had thought I was dead because my mother is in Florida and my father, he was in Jersey. My brother decides to go to sleep at 9:00 o'clock, so he didn't know what was going on until 3:00



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o'clock in the afternoon. He woke up to my mother yelling over the answering machine. He jumps up and he knew something was wrong because the way she was yelling. He goes over to the answering machine, 14 back-to-back messages. So he started listening to them. My wife had called. They were looking for me. Everybody was looking for me and my father, and they had knew my father was okay because that call came in at 2:00 o'clock, but they hadn't received a call from me until like 5:00, 6:00 o'clock. So they thought I was dead and my mother is making prayer and they're like, well, if he's gone, he went to hell. I'm like okay.

So after everything was said and done, I had to report back to work here the next day. I called my Lieutenant. I said I was off at 8:00. He said, well, you have to come back at 8:00 o'clock in the morning. I thought to myself the hell I am, you know what I'm saying? At that point everything started hitting me. It was just like it started to bother me and I just got really sad and depressed. I got back into work eventually about like 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon the next day, but I wasn't rushing back in because I was so tired and drained and it was like -- and to be honest

J. CHARLES

with you, I should have never left that day. I should have just stayed there until I passed out of exhaustion or something. I shouldn't have left because I was tired that day and those guys who stayed there like two weeks straight and I went home. So that's the only thing I felt guilty about. If anything I felt guilty, it was that. I mean, it was just like the worst day in everybody's lives. I mean, I couldn't believe it.

I remember what pissed me off going home was the fact that everybody was like laughing and looking like they were going out to the bars and still eating in diners. I'm like I know people are supposed to go on, but that was to me a little too soon. People were out there laughing in the streets and then there's laughing and they stopped to look at me like, oh, my God, look at him, look at his bike. It was weird.

That's pretty much it. I mean, anything else that will come to mind, I'm trying to write a little scripture about everything I went through that day. So, of course, stuff like that will come back to me later. I guess that's pretty much it.

Q. Okay. Is there anything you'd like to add to this interview?

A. No, not really.

J. CHARLES

MR. ECCLESTON: The interview is being  
concluded at 2212. The counter on the recorder is  
775.

File No. 9110494

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT EDWARD MARTINEZ

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

E. MARTINEZ

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 24, 2002.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. The time is now 1303 hours. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 17.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Eddie Martinez of Battalion 17, EMT. Eddie Martinez.

Q. Okay. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Eddie could you start from --

A. All right. On September 11, we were dispatched to the World Trade Center for an MCI, a mass casualty incident. It was in the morning. We didn't know what was going on. All we knew was that on the news a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. So we headed down there. We headed down towards the towers.

We took the FDR down, which was closed off to traffic. They had a special lane for the emergency vehicles, so we made good time getting down there. Once we were dispatched to Vesey and West Street, Vesey and West Street, upon entering the area, what we saw was like a total devastation from, I guess from the first plane that struck the tower. There were burnt cars. We saw -- it was like a grayish -- it was

E. MARTINEZ

night. It was sunlight. There was a lot of light. It was a sunny clear day, but in that area it was a grayish area. The sun wasn't shining. It was like fog, like a big fog.

We saw, like I said, burned vehicles, some of them were on fire. The buildings were just destroyed. The surroundings, there was too much for the eyes to capture everything all at once. It was like overwhelming.

We were told to go to our staging area, which we attempted to do, then we would reverse back up. I don't know the street that we were on at that time, at that moment. Everything looked the same. I was the tech. My partner was driving at the time.

Coming out of the -- getting out of the ambulance to get the equipment to go to where our staging area was supposed to be, I commented to my partner that there were some burnt parts on the floor, which turned out to be flesh that were strewn all around the place. Everywhere you looked you see a piece of something. At the time I didn't know what it was until I came close to it. I saw it was a piece of flesh.

At that time we just -- they told my partner

E. MARTINEZ

to turn the ambulance around and they had a new staging area, which was further away from the building, and we just made a U turn and went up, not that far from where we originally were assigned to and once we were there, we were -- I started taking the equipment out of the ambulance and I told my partner that I will see him in a little while with the first patient.

Well, he stood with the ambulance and I put all the equipment on the stretcher and put my gear on, my helmet and my coat, and headed down towards the towers. I was in front of the towers. I had walked a little distance, some distance from the ambulance, and I was attending a patient, somebody was hurt, it was on the ground. There were other patients all around, but this one was -- he was hurt.

I was talking to him when I heard a loud, like a roaring noise, like a loud loud roaring noise. At the time I didn't know what it was. I just looked up. All I could see because of the fog that was there, you couldn't see above. Your distance was limited. Once I heard that, I heard like a big explosion, a tremendous explosion, let me put it that way and a rumbling sound.

At that time I started seeing things coming

E. MARTINEZ

down. I attempted to grab -- I grabbed the person that I was talking to and to get away from that area, but he slipped back down and at that time everything started coming down. So I attempted to run some distance, which I couldn't run, because it overtook me. Like I said, it happened like really quick.

I also felt myself airborne. I was airborne. I didn't get that far. I was airborne. I felt a force behind me and it slammed me down on the ground. I got slapped down on the ground. Everything started hitting me, whatever was falling. At the time I didn't know what it was. I thought maybe that the building that was on fire exploded. I didn't know. I found out later on that the second plane had hit another building, the second tower.

When I fell, I fell forward and with my hands extended. I still was getting bombarded with a lot of heavy whatever it was hitting me, concrete, whatever. I was getting hit hard and when I fell on the floor that I fell with my -- on my stomach, face down with my hands extended, something heavy fell on my hand and bounced off. At that time my arm was broken.

I also felt some sharp pains to my back and then I was inside some -- a dark cloud of smoke. It



E. MARTINEZ

was so dark you couldn't see your hand. It was choking. It was like choking smoke. At that time, I had no idea where I was. I didn't hear no voices. I heard nothing. It was total silence.

I'm trying to find my way out of there with my broken arm. Holding on to my broken arm with the pain in my back, I just started walking in the direction that I fell, because I knew if I turned around I would lose my way, so I continued in that direction. It seemed like forever that I was in there. I didn't know -- it felt like it was walking in like suspended animation, that's what it felt like.

I continued walking and I heard some -- a voice, because I kept yelling is there anybody here, is there anybody here. I just kept walking and I heard a voice that just kept saying follow the light. I saw the light through the thick smoke. The light was like at a distance, but it was clear enough -- it was light. It was a bright light. It was clear enough to follow it.

So I continued following it. It wasn't -- as I was following it, I remember I felt a lot of heat. I didn't know what that was at the time. I got out of -- I started seeing -- it was like a haze. I saw

E. MARTINEZ

-- it was a vehicle that was burnt up and when I got out of the smoke there was nobody around. Nobody with a light, nothing. There was nobody around. It was just total silence.

I walked a short distance and I saw Karen, that was one of the paramedics from my old station. I saw her. I came over to her and told her that I was hurt. At that time they got me, put me inside -- helped me over to an ambulance. I told them my arm was broken. At that time they checked my back and they found that I had a deep laceration to my back. I couldn't breathe on my right side. My left was okay, I felt air going through. But my right side was like -- I was having problems, a lot of problems breathing.

At this time they splinted my arm and they checked my back. They told me that I have a deep laceration to my back and they thought that I may have what they call a pneumothorax. Turned out, lucky for me, that I didn't have a pneumothorax, but I did have a lot of shrapnel inside my back. That's what was hurting me.

They were attempting to take care of my back, when one of the other medics that was on the scene -- he was leery about the place, because there was no safe

E. MARTINEZ

area at this time. There was a lot going on. There was a lot of noise. I remember hearing still a lot of noise. I don't know if things were still falling, but all of a sudden we heard another rumbling sound and again with the smoke, you saw the smoke coming down and everybody just ran towards safety.

I ran into, I don't remember the place I ran into. I know I ran into a place that once I got inside, there was total -- there was a lot of smoke inside and a lot of people were every which way. They were going every direction. Nobody knew where to go or what direction to go.

I saw a woman there and she was like frozen with fear, I guess it was. So I went over to her and I tried to help her out. I tried to comfort her and telling her that everything is going to be okay, just calm down, because she was like almost hysterical, so I was taking care of her for a little while until I couldn't do it any more. I just like, I felt myself getting -- my breathing was getting worse. It wasn't getting any better.

So then at some -- I don't know who it was inside. I asked them if they had any oxygen and there were some EMTs, I guess from a volunteer ambulance

E. MARTINEZ

corps. They came over and I got an oxygen mask on me. At that time they checked my back and his reaction was like, you have like a big laceration to your back.

My main concern at that time, although my back was hurting and I was short of breath, because of all that smoke that I inhaled, my arm had been splinted. I was holding my arm as a matter of fact, the splint wasn't holding, so I was just holding my arm.

But that woman just kept -- I didn't want nothing to happen to her. It was like, you know, a woman in her 50s or something, somewhere around there. So I -- she was more calm. I talked to her for a little while. She seemed much better. Then some medical personnel I think came over and I told them and they took her.

Then at that time they started running inward towards -- further into the building that I was in, because they thought that the building was going to collapse outside. I had no idea what was going on outside. I didn't know that a plane had struck. All I knew was that I was hurt. I said no, I'm not going further into this building. As a matter of fact, I want to go out of the building, because this is an

E. MARTINEZ

unsafe area here.

I remember going out and it seemed like I walked for, I don't know how long a distance, because there were no blocks any more. It was just one big road, one big mess. I just continued walking and people were -- I remember two ESU cops, I think it was, grabbed me, because I was already too weak to go any further. I couldn't. I felt like I was going to pass out.

During the time that I got hit, when I was airborne, when I got slammed on the floor, I remember my initial reaction was to stay awake and don't pass out. I just kept repeating it to myself. Just don't pass out, stay awake, stay conscious and thank God, I did. I never lost consciousness throughout the whole thing.

At one time I couldn't get up. I couldn't get up, because I was being bombarded with whatever was hitting me and finally when it stopped, it just seemed like hours. It was probably just minutes or seconds. I finally got up. That's when I felt the pain in my back and I knew my arm was broken, because I felt it break.

They took me, I went to -- I remember seeing



E. MARTINEZ

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My partner, I wondered about him. He went in a -- I didn't see him. I was worried for him. When everything started coming down, I remember that he was with the ambulance. I didn't see him until two days later at the hospital. I had no idea what had happened to him. I asked some of the people about him. Nobody knew anything. Nobody had no information. All they knew -- well, everybody was in the same state that I was, in a confused state. Not knowing what had happened.

It wasn't until like two days later, because I was heavily sedated and on morphine, that I started -- they told me that the second plane had hit the building and that I was caught in the collapse of the building. 4 days later I was released from the hospital. I was there, yes, 4 days. Continued therapy until now. (inaudible).

Q. Okay. Do you remember roughly -- you had seen or heard on the news about the first plane hitting, right?

A. I saw -- I didn't hear anything about it

E. MARTINEZ

until around -- well, I knew that the first -- I knew there was a plane crash into the World towers. I didn't know what kind of plane it was. I thought it was maybe years ago that a plane hit the --

Q. Empire State Building?

A. Empire State Building. I thought it was a small plane, but I remember when we were going down towards the World Trade Center we were on the FDR Drive. I saw -- we got a clear view. I said this wasn't a small plane. This was bigger than I thought. Then later on was when I found out that it was a 747, or whatever, that hit that. I didn't know and like two days later is when they told me. I didn't watch the news until I got out of the hospital, until three days later. I didn't want to hear about the news, the newspapers or anything.

Q. Who was your partner that day?

A. Benny Badillo.

Q. When you arrived at the scene, you said you came first to Vesey and West?

A. Yes.

Q. When you got there, do you remember any other EMS personnel down there at that point, any officers that you recognized, or techs, medics?



E. MARTINEZ

A. There were other ambulances from different agencies down there. I didn't recognize anybody offhand. Like I said, I was like following -- it was just overwhelming, what I was looking at. I saw other emergency medical personnel. I saw some PD and firefighters around, but I didn't recognize anybody that I knew, until after I came out of the smoke. That's when Karen -- she blurted out like -- I don't want to say because you had an interview. You have this interview.

She was surprised that it was me and I recognized her and her partner -- I don't remember her partner's name. That's when I recognized her and they took a hold of me. I walked over to them.

Q. When they had you move or had your partner move the bus, do you remember where or what direction the bus got moved?

A. I know, I believe he was facing towards the towers, because we went up -- we went like down, seemed like a little hill. We were going down and they told us move the ambulance away from the area. They had a new staging area because that staging area was unsafe, which I was glad that we moved, because anything there got demolished, where we were before.

E. MARTINEZ

So we made a U turn, went back like up a hill, not that far a distance, and it was facing the towers with the ambulance facing the towers and that's when I took all the equipment out, I told him I will see you later with the first patient and I walked down towards the tower. I was right in front of it when all that started happening. I remember (inaudible). I didn't know where he was. I lost him completely.

Q. Okay. Anything else that you would like to add or comment on?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. RADENBERG: Okay. The time is now 1327.  
This will be the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110495

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

EMT BENJAMIN BADILLO

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

B. BADILLO

MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 24, 2002.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. Currently at EMS Battalion 17. The time is now 1410.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Benjamin Badillo, EMT.

Q. Mr. Badillo is assigned to EMS Battalion 17.

This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. All right. Prior to getting the assignment, we had just came off another assignment. We were located at 176 Street and Morris Avenue in the Bronx. When we went available they told us to switch to Citywide frequency and to go downtown and then after that, all the information came in via the computer.

So we started going downtown. I took the Cross Bronx, no, I took the Deegan down the FDR, and on the way down there, they were just -- when we got close enough, I don't remember at what point we were at, but you could see the World Trade Center on fire and all kinds of things happening.

I was pretty much horrified as well as my partner. I couldn't believe it was actually happening or that we were even going down there. You see things

B. BADILLO

like that on the news and stuff like that, but you don't expect to be in it.

So we are driving down the FDR, I was driving. My partner was just navigating at this point. We take the Battery Park tunnel and come up -- go under and come back around to West Street. We parked -- we got up to the World Trade Center. We got to -- it was right here somewhere. I know it was right before Vesey, pedestrian -- okay. We were between the two towers, so we made a U turn and parked on West Street right over here.

Q. By Liberty, just north of Liberty?

A. Yes, just north of liberty. At that point, we were being directed by a staging officer. I don't remember his name. We started getting our equipment together, on to the stretcher and everything. Helmet, jackets, everything we had we put on the stretcher. So as we started to go to the triage area, the staging officer told my partner, Eddie Martinez, to take all of the equipment, including the stretcher and everything to triage and the driver had to stay with the vehicle. So I stayed with the vehicle and that's pretty much the last I saw of Eddie that day.

Eddie walked with all the equipment around

B. BADILLO

the first -- second building, right between the two towers and that was the last I saw of him. So I was standing by the vehicle. I am looking around and I see cars just -- a couple of cars, not much at this point, destroyed and I could see some bodies right before we parked, between the two buildings, laying around in the street and right near our vehicle you could see -- I didn't know what it was at first. Then I'm looking at it and it was just body parts, just chunks of flesh you know, just spread out here and there. That was a little freaky. I have never seen anything like that.

I don't remember what time we got down there. I know it was a little after nine. Maybe 10 after nine, 15 after nine. It was around there. I don't remember exactly. I know the first flight had hit. I don't know if the second airliner had hit at that point. So I'm just sitting around at this point. I really didn't have anything to do but just wait.

About 5 minutes after just sitting there, I hear this really bad thundering sound. I didn't know what it was. It just sounded like thunder, but it was like different. When I look up into the sky, out of curiosity, I don't know what made me look, I could see the top of the building coming down. I paused for

B. BADILLO

about a second or two.

When I took my eyes off the building and back to the ground, I could see officers and a lot of people just running into the building, so I did the same thing, like any reasonable person would do, trying to save their own life. I ran inside -- I don't know if it was the Marriott Hotel or -- I don't know if the Marriott is shown in here.

Q. I believe it's in here. It used to be the Vista.

A. Yes, I don't remember if it was the Marriott or the building right next to it, because there were two buildings right near to each other. But as soon as I ran into the building, I took a right. I was just trying to get as deep into the building as I could in the lobby. A few officers ran in there and civilians ran in there with us.

As soon as I made the right, I tried to hide under a security desk and you could just hear everything came down. As soon as everything came down, the lobby and the lights -- the lobby filled up with smoke and debris. The lights went off. You couldn't see anything. It was completely dark. It was a really loud noise. I can't even describe it. But it was a



B. BADILLO

really really horrific nasty noise.

As soon as that happened, I couldn't breathe. It's like the next breath I took was full of smoke and debris. I know I wasn't like not breathing for a long time. I would say about 30 seconds to maybe a minute. I was very scared. I couldn't breathe out. I couldn't take a breath. I felt all that debris every time I took a deep breath, going deeper into my lungs.

After a little bit, I finally took a breath and I was able to breathe a little easier, but it was still burning a lot. I couldn't see anything. I was really frightened at this point. Luckily some of the officers had flashlights so we found our way.

As we made our way back out to the lobby, there was some light at the outer part of the lobby. There was a light there. I still wasn't too sure about where we were at. At this point, I called my friend Maurice Lewis, he is also an EMT here at Battalion 17. I told him to contact my fiance and my family and tell them where I was at and to go home and try to calm down.

I looked -- the phones weren't working too well. We tried but I couldn't get through. When we walked out, finally got out of the building, I didn't

B. BADILLO

know we were outside of the building, because it was completely dark. Next thing I know I heard a loud slam and a girl screaming. When I looked back, it was a girl from one of the private ambulance companies jumping out the back door of her ambulance, screaming, really scared. At this point I was scared. I freaked out for a brief moment. I guess anybody would.

Q. Right.

A. But I came to my senses pretty quickly. I was like I really have to calm down and get out of here. So this girl pulls me and an officer and she says oh, please come and check on my partner. He is sitting in the front. I don't know what happened to him, but he is laying on the side. We went to go check on him and he was just really badly burned. It was obvious that he was dead. Nothing we could do, so we kept on walking.

We kept on walking south towards Battery Park. On the way, I don't know how much time had passed before the second collapse, but we kept -- I was okay physically. At this point, I was breathing better and I could actually see my way around. I got on the radio. I was screaming for my partner, you know, I tried to go in there and look for him, but it was too

B. BADILLO

dark. There was even more debris where he was at. I started screaming his name, but there was nothing I could do. So I just kept walking.

On the way down, we just kept running into some people. We all got on one of the big MTA busses, the city busses and for some reason or another, we didn't get kicked out, but somebody said we got to get out of the bus or whatever. So we got out the bus. I held this girl close to me to make sure she was okay, because she was in bad shape. We were helping some people out. There were a lot of people with broken arms and legs, so we were trying to help them out the best we could. A lot of confusion, you know. I really didn't know what to do next. There was no direction. There was nobody telling you what to do. Everything was destroyed.

The first thought on my mind is where is the train station, so I can get the hell out of here and go home. But then again, I knew I couldn't go home, so then I remember seeing a command car driving around and there was a Chief and a Lieutenant and an EMT in there. I forget the Chief's name. It was Mark Steffens, Chief Mark Steffens. The Lieutenant. I always have a hard time with his name. But he was one

B. BADILLO

of my original instructors. I don't even remember anybody else's name.

They told me to get inside the vehicle and about two minutes later, we made a U turn heading south, because he was coming up north and then he made a U turn going south again, down towards Battery Park, and I could hear the second rumble and I already knew what it was. I knew it was the second building collapsing.

I just started screaming inside the vehicle. I was like get the -- you know, get out of here. Let's go, let's go. He was doing his best, but there were people running all over the place. You can't run people over.

We made it down to Battery Park. We are looking outside the windows and you could see all the ashes and debris and all kinds of stuff just going all the way down. It looked like, from what I have seen on TV, you know, when volcanos erupt and the ashes go all over the place and it is raining and snowing ashes. It looked like that. It was very very scary.

People were hiding at the -- taking cover, shelter by the fort down there or something. There is something down there near Battery Park. That's where a

B. BADILLO

lot of people retreated to. We were down there for about an hour or two afterwards.

When it cleared out, we were helping people evacuate on the boats, going to Jersey. I was asking anyone if they have seen my partner. I remember Karen Lamanna from Battalion 14, she said that she had saw him with another medic. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

After that, we kind of just hung out down there for a while. We got everybody out. We moved over to the Staten Island Ferry, where all the people load up to take the ferry and stuff. That was pretty much the rest of the day there. I stayed there for about two hours and then I managed to sneak away. They didn't want me leaving, but I was covered in dust. I couldn't breathe very well. I was spitting up a lot of black stuff, junky stuff.

So I snuck away with -- I saw Mike Kenna, who is also an EMT here and Charlie Vitale. I snuck away

B. BADILLO

with them just looking around. We were walking around, we just like -- I don't remember exactly what streets we took, but I know we went around the whole World Trade Center. This little square.

You could see -- I don't know which tower was it. I think it was the north tower, we saw the north tower, just like what was left of it, just burning and a lot of fire. There was ashes everywhere, everywhere. I don't know how far this thing went, but it was really bad.

Walking around, we came out to Rector Street. We saw one of the landing gears from the airplane. I was trying to look for my vehicle, because by this time it had cleared up a lot, so you could see a lot. I was trying to figure out where exactly I was. I couldn't find my vehicle. I mean everything was destroyed. I can't say it enough.

We walked around. I kept running into people. I ran into Felix Hernandez, another EMT here at the Battalion. There was a lot of people. I saw the Chief of EMS, Robert McCracken. He was telling us to retreat back to the triage area at the Staten Island Ferry, but I didn't listen. I just kept walking around. Like I knew what just happened, what was going

B. BADILLO

on, but I felt very confused, lost. It was a bad feeling. I just didn't know my way.

At this point, okay, we are still walking around and we are just running into a lot of body parts and we ran into a person's torso, just no legs, no head, no arms, nothing, just chest and stomach area. We were tagging body parts, whatever we could find.

Then like 15 feet away I found a head to go to the torso. I don't mean to be so graphic, but I would just like to describe whatever I saw. It was just the brains hanging out of the skull, just completely flapping over, like you just opened up a can or something like that. Out of curiosity, I don't know why, but I just put on a pair of gloves and I picked it up. I just started moving it around and you could see the face and everything, but it was all crushed and everything, no facial bones, no eyes, nothing, so we tagged it and we went along.

By thistime the Chief found me, he caught up to me and said get back to -- I was like, okay. By that time, later on, a few hours later, back at the ferry, I found out that Eddie was taken to New Jersey Medical Center or something like that, that he was going to be okay and so that was a little -- and I had

B. BADILLO

gotten in contact with some of my family members. They were really nervous.

I just wanted to make sure everybody was home, my son. I called him up. Kids don't know any better. I just wanted to make sure he was okay. I stayed there until about 11 o'clock at night. I got a ride back to the Bronx and right back here to the Battalion. It was a really rough, long day and I was really stressed out.

I'm walking into the door and people are just looking at me like whatever, I just got out of a war zone or something. I was literally covered from head to toe. It was in my underwear, it was in my shirt, in any my ears, everywhere. So I looked pretty bad.

I jumped in my car and I went home. My fiance, I live with my fiance. She was pretty good. I started watching the news and I saw the planes hitting the towers. I didn't know it was like the worst part of the whole day. I couldn't believe they actually got that on camera and I couldn't believe just seeing it.

Then I got some more bad news the next day. That was pretty much the end of the day after that. I didn't want to come to work the next day, but being that I was physically okay, they made me come for



B. BADILLO

another 12 hours, which is all right.

The next day I just heard that one of the firefighters who used to be an EMT, Hector Tirado, was missing, and pretty much considered dead at this point. Then another good friend of mine, she was an EMT for St. Barnabas, Imelda Reno. I found out that she was confirmed dead. That really hurt a lot. Because I knew Imelda for quite a few years. She was really a nice young lady.

Lieutenant (inaudible), he saw I was kind of disturbed by all this. He put us out of service and he suggested that I go talk to a psychiatrist at Jacobi emergency room. I took a few days off. I mean I came in, but I just kind of hung out at the station.

I didn't want to be bothered with doing 911 calls or nothing, nothing. I just didn't want to do it. I felt pretty good, but it just kept coming back. I was having trouble sleeping. To this point I feel pretty good. I don't think about it as much.

I guess I don't know if it's from the World Trade Center events, but I still have some trouble sleeping. I have spoken to some counselor, psychiatrist. It helped a lot to see that my partner was alive and okay. So thank God for that.

B. BADILLO

That was pretty much it. The things I saw and felt.

Q. Okay. When you guys first got in to Liberty and West, it was about up here that you had parked the bus somewhere?

A. Right by here somewhere.

Q. Do you know where the triage area that Eddie was headed for was?

A. I heard it was Church and Vesey, but Vesey is up here. I don't know how -- I know Eddie walked between the two buildings.

Q. He went into the plaza itself?

A. Yes, the plaza itself. That's the last -- that's the last -- that's where he was headed, but I don't know. Vesey is kind of far up here. Where is Church? Yes, Vesey and Church. I don't know if they had another triage area in the plaza itself, because there were a lot of vehicles parked around the buildings and the towers and stuff. That's the last I saw or heard.

Q. Okay. Anything else you would like to add?

A. No, I just thank God I'm here to tell the story. It was the scariest thing I have ever seen in my life. I never imagined to be involved. Like I said

B. BADILLO

earlier, you sit at home, you watch these horrible stories on TV and you read about them in the newspaper, so many deaths, so many lives destroyed and to actually feel like -- that I'm a part of history you know.

I just can't believe that I was there. I couldn't believe that I was there. To this day I still can't believe it. Other than that, I'm doing pretty good these days. Trying to get everything back on track.

MR. RADENBERG: Good. Okay. Thank you. The time is now 1434. This is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110496

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

PARAMEDIC CAMILLE MARRONCELLI

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

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MR. RADENBERG: Today is January 24, 2002.

I'm Paul Radenberg of the Fire Department's World Trade Center Task Force. I'm currently at EMS Battalion 20. The time is now 1534.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Paramedic Camille Marroncelli, Battalion 20.

Q. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Could you begin with when you were assigned.

A. Actually, we were assigned -- we got on to the West Side Highway as the second plane hit the second tower. We had just gotten on to the West Side Highway from the Cross Bronx and my partner was -- he was monitoring the radio. I was trying to get through traffic going down there. He said a second plane hit the second tower. We hit a lot of traffic going down there so we were delayed. Our response time was delayed.

We finally arrived down there and we took West Street going down. It was clear, the West Side Highway was cleared from, I think it was 79 Street when they shut it down, so we were clear all the way down, going straight on down. As soon as you could see the towers from the highway, as soon as we could -- we got

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them in our eyesight, we could see that they were both burning. We kind of both wondered what we were driving into at that point.

We got down, like I said, we went down West Street and we got down as far as, I'm not sure, we were probably around maybe 6, 7 blocks from the towers. I don't know exactly the cross street location that we were at, but there were maybe 10 ambulances down there before us, but most of them were Metro Care units and Hatzolah units were down there. There was maybe two or three other Fire Department EMS units down there.

There were no Lieutenants, no bosses, we couldn't find anybody. We pulled up right where all the other ambulances were. Unfortunately, they were all facing the towers. I thought it was kind of odd that they would be facing the disaster. In the event that we had to get out, they had no egress.

Finally one of the bosses pulled up. I don't even remember what his name was. We were trying to get organized and he asked who was the senior person. It happened to be me there. I have a lot of years on the job. He stated to me that you are in charge of staging and triage. I said okay, fine. I had done some mock drills when I had been a boss in '95 in Manhattan and I

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had no problem with taking command of staging.

I just directed all the units to get in the vehicles and turn them around so we would be facing away from the towers. We were in the process of doing this and that's when the first building came down. Most of the people that were in the ambulances trying to move them just continued driving up West Street. I was on foot.

I jumped into the back of a Metro Care ambulance, as a matter of fact, and directed the driver to just drive, but what happened at that point was that the cloud that came up West Street, it just engulfed the vehicle, so we had to stop. Unfortunately for me, they left me in the vehicle. Everybody was scared. It was just everybody was so frightened, it was like survival of the fittest at that point.

When I was able to finally get out of the vehicle, you still couldn't see, because it hadn't dissipated that much. It kind of like shuffled along until this cloud dissipated and you kind of jumped into action, because it was pretty hard to miss a paramedic on the back of your uniform. Everybody was coughing and couldn't see. I kind of sort of directed people to the ambulance units that were there. I directed them

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to get all their sterile water, take it out and kind of showed some of the people how to irrigate their eyes and stuff and gave people direction, tried to elicit bystanders to help and so on and so forth.

I had to separate from my partner. I don't know where he went. We were just like -- everybody was in a fog at that point. Maybe 5 minutes had passed and I got my partner and we were trying to make some semblance of order. Look for a supervisor, find out what was going on, what we needed to do, where we needed to be.

Shortly after the first building came down, the second building collapsed, but at that point we were further up West Street, because we had moved from the first collapse, so we did the same thing. We got into the ambulance and we drove further up West Street. I don't know. We were there. It was just a lot of -- it was madness, it was confusion and it was -- I'm sorry, because it's --

We were directed at that point, not really at that point, but a while later, because there was just nobody to kind of give us orders where to go. When things settled a little bit they directed everybody to go to Chelsea Piers. So all the units went up there



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and that's when they -- I mean we sat there. We sat there and we didn't do anything because there was no way for anybody to do anything. We couldn't near the buildings, we couldn't get near the rubble because of the smoke and the fire and everything else that was going on, so we just -- it was just a feeling of feeling helpless at that point.

Everybody was eager to do stuff, but there was nothing really to do on our end. From what I understand from speaking with people afterwards, people who were on the other end had transported patients and so on and so forth, but we didn't have any patients until very much later on, when we transported some firefighters, but that was not until like when the third building fell, which was way later on.

Q. About 5 o'clock?

A. Yes. 5 o'clock. It was in the evening, but from the point that the second tower collapsed until that point, we were down in Chelsea Piers. I mean they brought us into -- near Stuyvesant High School. I don't remember what time it was. Maybe sometime in the afternoon they brought us down there and they made us sit there in case we needed to -- as I said, we wound up transporting 5 firefighters. They had minor

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injuries.

I don't know what else to tell you other than that it was very unorganized and it didn't get organized even into the evening over there with who was going to do what and how they were going to transport the patients and any kind of organization. They said set up Chelsea Piers at that point as a disaster area and it was like a mock hospital and they had everything and anything you needed in there, but still it wasn't being utilized, because we couldn't get anybody out from the towers and what not.

Other than that, I don't know what else I could tell you that would be helpful with regard to what happened. I'm probably missing stuff because I'm not -- maybe there is stuff that I don't want to remember. I don't know. It was -- as time goes on -- it's been what, almost 4 months now.

Q. 4 and a half months.

A. 4 and a half months now, but it's still very hard to talk about it, because it's just -- especially with people on this job that have -- I don't know. I was born and raised in New York and I grew up when they were building the towers. We used to travel to Staten Island when I was a kid and we used to take the FDR

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Drive down to where the ferry is and that's where we used to take the ferry and as a kid I grew up with watching these things being built.

Just the whole idea of those things coming down, it's still to this day it's very disturbing. It's still pretty -- I mean I know it happened, but when I go down to the city, it seems like almost like you are in a dream. I'm in a dream when I see that they are not there. So to talk about it is difficult. I never thought that I would be a part of such a bad part of history in this country.

I mean on the job, it's a hard job sometimes, and I'm part of a lot of the things that happened because I help people. That's a good thing. Maybe I was able to help somebody. That's good. But to be there and to not have been able to do anything because of the situation, it was very disheartening, because you train for a long time to be there at a time when you are most needed in a disaster.

Unfortunately it was beyond anybody's control, what you could and couldn't do. I have been to all these drills and it's just very different when it's real. It's just everybody, like everything goes out the window and people just -- I mean because of the

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extent of that catastrophe, how big it was, there were just so many people that couldn't make any sense of it, let alone act. It was just -- mentally and emotionally it was that disturbing, that it was so hard to kind of like get your thoughts together.

You react because it's second nature on this job and that's the only reason why people -- a lot of people rose to the occasion, because it is second nature. If you stood there and really had to think about what you had to do, you would have been more paralyzed than you were, because that's the time to act and not contemplate. Later on it's going to really kind of -- you contemplate it and it just becomes very disturbing; all the images and the images that we saw when we got down there; people jumping out of the building and it just seemed very unreal, but it wasn't, unfortunately. It wasn't unreal.

Q. Who were you working with that day?

A. I was working with Richie Natal.

Q. Is he an EMT?

A. He's a paramedic.

Q. When you first got down in the area, you said you were like about 6 blocks north of the Center on the west side. Do you remember what, aside from the

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ambulances, do you remember any other buildings that were around there, that might be like a landmark?

A. No, no. All I saw were ambulances and fire trucks and apparatus and police cars and that's all I was like concentrating on, with all that excitement, because you get very caught up in the adrenaline. You just get very caught up with what is going on. Things that aren't really -- and I guess it was, things on the periphery really weren't important, because you had these two huge structures in front of you that were just -- that's where your eyes were. All eyes were on those buildings. You just couldn't take your eyes off those buildings. So whatever was around me, I really couldn't tell you.

Q. The other Department ambulances that were in the area, did you recognize anybody that was part of the crews from those units?

A. From the voluntaries?

Q. No, from the Department, the EMS ambulances.

A. Yes, there was one of the Battalion 15 units. I think it was 15 Boy was there. There was another medic unit there, but I don't remember who they were. I don't remember them at all. They might have been from Queens or something, but there was definitely

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another -- because a lot of people from the station were assigned. Maybe we were one of the first arriving units down there because we volunteered.

My partner Richie is a bit of a buff. He was like let's go, let's go. I was like all right, let's go. Not to think that it would be something as catastrophic as this. A lot of Jacobi units were there. As I said, the only one that I recognized was this other unit, 15 Boy. It is an EMT unit.

Q. The Lieutenant that arrived there, you said you didn't recognize him at all?

A. No, I don't remember who it was.

Q. Any idea where he went after he put you in charge of staging and triage?

A. I have no idea. It was just, it seemed like, because there was so much to do, because everybody was just running around like chickens without heads. There was no semblance of order. It was trying to get people to -- a group of people to do the same thing for the same purpose, because it was very hard to get people organized.

They kind of parked their vehicles there and I don't know where they went, these people, so we had to get them to like -- because you couldn't move this

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vehicle unless this vehicle was -- do you know what I'm saying? So we are trying to get everybody to move their vehicles.

Q. All blocked in?

A. Yes. They were all facing the towers. If we had patients, we need to be going in the other direction. But no, I don't know where he went. He had his hands full, as did everybody else at that point in time.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. No, other than I don't know, I think that there are a lot of the EMTs and paramedics that were down there were -- had every good intention. This is what we go to school for. This is what we train for, to take care of the sick and injured, and unfortunately, we were utilized, but not to the effect that we wanted to be, because circumstances that were beyond our control, but we were there ready and willing to serve and I think that for myself, being down there as early as I was and seeing the whole thing transpire before my eyes, if we could have done more, we would have.

I think that a lot of times we are just not given the credit. Just being there and having to

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experience something like that. People should get credit for that. Nobody should have to see something like that in their lifetime. It doesn't leave you. It stays with you. Hopefully people use it in a good way. Something good could come out of this, the way people view things, then it wasn't all in vain.

Unfortunately we lost a lot of people, the Department lost a lot of people and the world in general lost a lot with that event. Especially the people in New York. Especially people that are native New Yorkers, that grew up in the city and feel like they helped to make the city what it is today.

So it's part of like your -- it's your home. You feel like you were violated. You take it personally. I took it personally. I think a lot of people that don't live in New York that feel as they do for the city. There is a lot of people that work for the city. Civil servants. Obviously we love our jobs, because it's not the best paying job in the world, but there is more to jobs than being the best paying job in the world and when you are a civil servant in New York, I mean there are a lot of people in New York that you have to take care of.

That's part of what I guess the love for the



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city is, just being there to do what you are supposed to do when you are called upon. I think everybody that was from this Department, from EMS did their job and a lot of people did above and beyond their jobs.

MR. RADENBERG: Time is now 1554. This will be the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110507

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

MR. ANTHONY DeMAIO

Interview Date: January 28, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is January 28th, 2002. The time now is 944 hours. This is Lieutenant Monty Feiler with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned area.

MR. DeMAIO: Anthony DeMaio, assistant deputy director, fleet services, 58th Street.

MR. FEILER: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We're interviewing him regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present for the interview is Investigator Fabiola Quevedo.

Q. You can go ahead and begin on the morning of September 11th, how you first became aware and what your actions were that morning.

A. Like work any other day here. It's a shop. I actually had left the building. I think I ran up to the post office and came back. On the way back from the post office, I saw there was smoke coming from one of the towers. When I

reached the shop, at that point no one knew what was going on, although it seemed like an accident.

Most of the guys, most of the supervisors, were already up on the roof so they had a clear view of what was going on. I proceeded up to the roof. At this point we didn't know what was really happening, although it looked like an airplane or something struck the building.

I came back downstairs. At that point it was on TV. They had the TV on in the supervisors' room. At that point we didn't receive any call yet from our boss.

Q. About what time was that?

A. This was right after that first plane hit the first tower.

I came down here from upstairs. At this point when I was down here -- as soon as I made it downstairs to find out what was going on, what we were doing, the second plane hit the building, the second building.

Sometime in the next couple minutes we got a call from the control room over at 34th

Street. That's when Tom McDonald, our boss, he requested that we all report to the area. Normally we do that on a fourth alarm duty or major accidents. In a major incident, one of us from either side, depending who was involved, responds. In this case he requested us all down there.

Me and Mike Felice, my boss, Mike Felice, left here, headed into Manhattan, which was -- everything was jammed up. We took the Midtown Tunnel. As a matter of fact, as we're going into the tunnel, there was four -- we were trying to follow a police car down into the tunnel. There were four firefighters on foot -- they couldn't go any further with their personal car, because everyone was told to report down there -- which we picked up and got them into lower Manhattan.

We dropped them off. We get down to West Street. We were pretty far down West Street, as a matter of fact.

Q. Do you know where you dropped off the firefighters?

A. The firefighter was on -- if I'm not

mistaken, it was on Broadway. As we were coming down, I think on Broadway. Broadway comes down; right?

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah, it was on Broadway somewhere. He was not completely downtown. It was somewhere in the teens, I believe. We ended up dropping them all off at that point, because one of the guy's firehouses was there and then from there they all --

Q. Do you know their names?

A. No. I didn't know who they were. We just knew they were firefighters, because they were asking police in front of us for a lift. They couldn't go any further, and we ended up taking them.

I think when we pulled up it looked pretty far down. We were probably parked around I think it was Murray or Warren when we pulled up to the scene. At that point when we got out of the car, we realized that the first tower went down. There was no tower there. We already realized that something happened.

We were trying to raise our other

halves from 34th Street on the radio. No response. When the tower came down, we knew that they were there before us. We were starting to get a little concerned. There was no response. Communications were down. We weren't able to communicate with any of our mechanics. We weren't able to communicate back to the shop.

So we're starting towards the scene. It had to be maybe -- we were practically underneath it. We were on the other side of the pedestrian bridge. Definitely we were on the other side of the bridge. All of a sudden -- yeah, we were, because the pedestrian bridge goes over to the high school.

That's when we heard the rumble. We looked up, and the second tower was coming down. We turned around. We run out of here. I lose my boss. I couldn't find him for a while. I continued running north. Then after a while everything started to settle down, I started to work my way back.

At this point now -- we still couldn't find anybody. Now I even lost Mike. I couldn't find him. What happened was Mike had ducked into

the high school. That's why I knew where we were, because we were already past that bridge. When he ran back, he saw someone had made it into the high school, and he ducked into the high school. I didn't notice that. I just continued going up.

After everything settled down a little bit, some of the dust settled down, we started to work our way back again. At this point we found McDonald, Tom McDonald. He was all covered in soot and dust. He was all right. A few minutes later we ran into the other guys we were looking for: Tom Curty, Andy Diamond, I think Lou Morbelli was with them also. They were there actually before the first tower came down. They were there before we were.

Basically that was it up to the point where the tower came down. Then it was just like trying to find where everybody was. We didn't know where all our guys were. We knew there were a lot of guys down there, a lot of the guys from the emergency trucks respond. We spent a good time just making sure we found where they were and they were okay.



Then we just started to go through -- everything started to settle down, and we started to go through the place and try to make sense of everything. It was (inaudible).

Q. Where do you think you were at that point?

A. Most of the time after the building came down, we were probably underneath the pedestrian bridge, in that area.

Q. On West Street?

A. Yeah, on West Street. That's where they set up the command post.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. Once it was a little -- after a couple hours when everything started to settle down, we started to -- actually before that we did a walk -- we did a search. We searched through one side. We came like through the Merrill Lynch building, I guess -- no, the exchange, American Express building, which was across from the towers. We walked around through the back of that.

When we came up on -- over here somewhere. It was actually -- I forget the name

of the street. North End?

Q. Had the second building collapsed yet?

A. Yeah. No, what happened, like I said, we were walking towards the scene. That's when we heard the rumbling and the second building started coming down. That's when we ran.

Q. So you got there after the first building collapsed?

A. Yes, after the first building collapsed and just prior to the second building coming down.

Basically what we normally do at any operation, normal operation, is make sure that the apparatus is fueled, make sure that everything is running, there was no problems mechanically on it, whether it's apparatus or ambulances or whatever it is.

But in this case we had apparatus that was totally destroyed, partially destroyed, abandoned. We spent the next week basically trying to salvage anything that we thought was salvageable that we could kickback into service.

Our concern was that we lost so many pieces that if there's anything here that we can

get back into service, you know, get it back to the shop, get it cleaned up, get it working, and get it back to the house, at least they'll have something, because there was a lot of pieces gone.

That's what we spent the next week doing, basically, is finding apparatus that was abandoned, getting them to run. Most of them had all the glass blown out of them, full of soot, dust and debris. Getting it back to the shop. Same thing with ambulances.

Then we tried to make -- we kept a running log of what we found along the way that was beyond repair. We were pulling them into the shop whatever possible so we could keep track of at least what we had.

Basically that's what we did.

Q. Is there anything else you think is important?

A. That's it.

Q. On behalf of the department, I want to thank you.

MR. FEILER: We'll conclude the interview at 953 hours.

File No. 9110511

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT HOWARD HAHN

Interview Date: February 1, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. FEILER: Today's date is February 1st, 2002. The time now is 936 hours. This is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

MR. FEILER: Lieutenant Hahn of Battalion 50.

LIEUTENANT HAHN: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview in the Division 4 conference room regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is --

MS. MAGGI: Diana Maggi.

MR. FEILER: Of the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

Q. What I'd like you to do is if you can just relate a scenario of what happened on the morning of September 11th, how you became involved, and go up to the second building collapse.

A. I heard the initial crash over my scanner. I contacted Captain Sickles of

Battalion 45. That day I was detailed to Battalion 45 as their conditions car. I went back to the battalion. I picked up Captain Sickles. He was on the phone with citywide. They told us to respond in to the scene.

We responded down to the staging area, which was at that time Vesey and West. Upon arrival I parked my car near north and Vesey. I went directly to the treatment area or triage area at 3 World Financial Center, American Express building. Captain Sickles went over to the command post or proceeded to the command post.

We started having a treatment area outside the American Express building. After approximately 10 or 15 minutes we felt that it was safer to go inside the American Express building, which we did.

About 10 to 15 minutes after we were inside the building, the first tower came down. At that point we moved towards the rear of the building, and then someone started telling us there's a possibility of a gas leak. So we started moving north along West Street, north

towards I guess Murray Street, when the second building started coming down.

At that point we started -- everything basically became chaos. Everyone went left, right. There was no control at all. Most of the equipment was left in the American Express building around the streets there.

After the second building settled, I heard over the radio that they were setting up a command post at West and Vesey, with that, I proceeded over to that area, and I started taking instructions from the -- I think at that time it was Chief Goldfarb.

Q. When you first heard the initial incident over your scanner, were you on duty?

A. I was on duty as conditions 45 that morning.

Q. You said you called --

A. I called Captain Sickles and advised him that I heard this on the scanner. I know he has a scanner too. He told me to respond back to the battalion. I know he got on the phone with the tour commander, who apparently I guess instructed us to go directly into the scene.

Q. Captain Sickles went with you?

A. Yes.

Q. In your command car?

A. Correct.

Q. At any time were you given any instruction over the radio or telephone where to respond to?

A. Over the radio we heard staging was set up at Vesey and West.

Q. You responded after the first building was struck but before the second building?

A. Correct.

Q. What route did you take down there?

A. We went through the tunnel, FDR Drive. We got off at I guess it was the Manhattan Bridge, because traffic started backing up. We started proceeding through I guess the Village or whatever it is down there, on the streets.

Q. Did you get any further instruction on the radio?

A. No.

Q. Did you stay on Queens or citywide?

A. At that time we were on citywide.

Q. When you got into the area, where did



you park your vehicle?

A. When I got there I parked on Vesey Street close to North End.

Q. By that time was the second building hit?

A. Most probably. I don't know the exact time. I think it was probably already hit.

Q. Then you made your way over to the American Express building?

A. I made my way over to the American Express building where Captain Pinkus was the command officer of that area.

Q. Did you see any other EMS people?

A. There were approximately -- at that time when I arrived there were at least eight units with stretchers and equipment at the American Express. There were numerous units already at the scene.

Q. Did you know any of them?

A. I'm trying to think. I know there was a unit from Roosevelt Hospital. I think it was 9 Boy. There was at least one Hazollah unit, with two ALS, maybe a city unit. I'm sure exactly. There were at least eight units on the scene with

their stretchers and equipment by the American Express building.

Q. You were able to set up patient care or triage?

A. We set up basically -- were setting up triage and patient care, that area. Then we started to move it inside the building as a safety zone. So we were inside the building approximately five, ten minutes before the first building came down.

Q. What happened when the building came down?

A. Well, when the first building -- originally we set up at the front of the building, just inside, so if we saw anybody coming we could get them inside. When the first building came down, we moved towards the rear of the building closer towards -- the furthest, towards Four World Financial, this area over here, back of the American Express building.

Then they were talking about possible gas leaks and so on, so we moved out of the building and we moved to some other buildings along I guess it was North End Avenue. There's I

know a school there that we went to. Then they evacuated that area because they were worried about gas leaks. We started moving all the way up, going up West Street.

Q. You stayed with Captain Sickles?

A. At that point -- no, Captain Sickles went originally to the command post. I was with Captain -- Jace -- Captain Pinkus. Chief Carrasquillo came in at one point, and we started running around. Then at that point it really became chaos and there was total loss of control.

Q. That's when the second building collapsed?

A. No, we basically were towards the rear of the American Express building I think more here when the second building came down. Then we started running. We were down near Vesey and West Street or Vesey and North End when the second building came down, but we were inside both times.

Q. Did you see any patients at that time?

A. There were no real patients coming to us. We had a couple patients that were full of dirt and stuff, so when the first building came

down we got inside, but at that point they really refused treatment, those patients.

Q. Your command car stayed --

A. My command car originally stayed at West and Vesey. As a hole cleared up, I moved it up. I was able to get around, and I moved it up to the command post. Then I went off to do other triage areas and so on. Captain Sickles gave the keys to my command car to Dr. -- the one who's in charge overall from the Fire Department. The one who took over Giordano's spot or whatever.

Q. John Clair?

A. John Clair. He gave my keys to the command car to John Clair. He took off for wherever, and I didn't see the car for two days, and my equipment was in it.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important? Any recollections you want to share?

A. It was a hell of a day. Initially the first three hours (inaudible).

Q. Were you ever able to use your radio or your cell phone?

A. My cell phone on and off I believe I

was able to use.

Q. How about the department radio?

A. Yeah, I was able to get through, but the transmissions was very hard. It was very hard to control. You're doing basically your own show.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add? No? Okay. In that case, we want to thank you for your cooperation?

MR. FEILER: The time now is 945 hours, and this concludes the interview.